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ABSTRACT

Canada provides a unique example of the way in which practical communication problems have produced an awareness of communication theory, policy, and practice. This book brings together a collection of essays which aim to philosophically, analytically, and historically explore the lessons to be gained from Canadian communications activity and highlight the many contributions that Canada has made to North American communications. The book contains such essays as "Communication Theory and the Marginal Culture: The Socio-aesthetic Dimensions of Communication Study" by Donald Theall; "Canadian Media Regulation" by Frank Peers; "Issues in Canadian Cultural Policy" by Hugo McPherson; "Communication: The State of the Canadian News Media" by Dick MacDonald; "The Politics of Information and Culture During Canada's October Crises" by Gertrude Robinson; "Candadian Communication Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis" by James Carey; and "Moloch or Aquarius: Strategies for Evaluating Future Communications Needs" by Gordon Thompson. (TS)

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# STUDIES IN CANADIAN COMMUNICATIONS

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## Introduction

This is an intensely personal book. It not only brings together most of what we as editors consider the more important contemporary thought on Canadian communications, but it also reflects our intellectual attitudes toward the study of human communication. The collected essays can roughly be divided into three categories: theory, policy, and Canadian communication praxis. Together these papers form a unity not because they were commissioned for this volume, but because each writer as an individual is responding to trends and opportunities unique to the Canadian situation in the seventies. Four of these unique aspects should be particularly mentioned in the beginning, for they have especially influenced the themes, judgements, values and styles of analysis of the eleven papers. They are Canada's geopolitical marginality, Canadian government's attitude toward regulation, government attitudes towards cultural policy and the absence of academic concern with communication studies in the past. The implications of each of these unique features is explored in one or another of the essays and a survey of their author's conclusions therefore provides a natural introduction to this volume.

Canada's geopolitical marginality on the fringe of the North American continent seems to have given rise to two distinct outlooks: a particular perception of this country's cultural mission and a unique communications philosophy. Grierson saw this mission as fostering and preserving Canada's <u>own</u> identity vis-a-vis both the mother country and its southern neighbour. In the late thirties therefore the National Film Board under his direction selected the north as an orienting symbol to embody Canada's unique reality, a reality which economists, politicians and communications engineers find problematic to this day. In the north lie the untapped natural resources required for modern survival, the north also is the cradle of the continent's original settlers whose life style is being threatened by extinction. In the north moreover, Canadians are utilizing communications technology on both a grand and a small scale, pitting the most up-to-date satellite technology and the relatively unsophisticated closed circuit radio telephone against climate, isolation and space.

Geopolitical marginality also has something to do with the fact that it took Canadians a hundred years to begin to want to know more about themselves and to talk to each other. This new cultural awareness has been translated into various kinds of social support for the performing arts, for the film, for the book and magazine industries and for Canadian content in Broadcasting. It is also reflected in the Broadcasting Act's concern with human needs and the human implications of communications technology. This legislation enacted in 1932 stipulated that all citizens irrespective of location should have access to broadcast messages. In a country with the size and population of Canada this was and is an idealistic mandate which has generated sensitivities to the needs of marginal people and cultural differences.

On the practical level of communication research the awareness of marginal people has given rise to two novel projects: Simon Fraser's

Raven study and the National Film Board's "Challenge for Change". The Raven project, Gail Martin notes, demonstrates two important insights about modern communications technology. It can first of all be scaled down and adapted to specific needs of human communication. So on the rugged coast of British Columbia a closed circuit radio network is helping Indian groups to overcome communications problems posed by language and isolation. Second, the process of designing a "culture free" system helps sensitize the rest of us to the biases of conventional media technology: largeness, efficiency, technological sophistication, and hierarchical restriction of access and cost. All these biases affect the structure of Canada's social communication patterns in ways which may not be humanly beneficial in the long run.

A similar mandate to "improve communications, create greater understanding, promote new ideas and provoke social change", is evident in the government's "Challenge for Change" programme established in 1968. In the past seven years this agency has utilized film to help describe and change the lives of Fogo islanders, Quebec unemployed, Prairie farmers, Canadian women and indigenous minorities. It has also explored alternative uses of cable as a means for democratising access and demystifying the established media. How well this small group of dedicated Challenge for Changers has done and what it learned is reflected in Dorothy Todd Hénaut's analysis of the role of film in social change and self-realization. Even though it may not have succeeded in all of its aims, "Challenge for Change" has attracted attention far beyond the nation's borders for its human use of communications technology.

Three other papers explore theoretical insights emerging from what might be considered a particularly Canadian philosophy of communications. For James Carey and Donald Theall, Harold Innis, the Toronto economic historian, emerges as the father of an original theory which stresses that human communication is based on inter-subjective understanding rather than on control of one's environment. Such a stance, which evolved as a counter balance to British and U.S. scholarship, requires a historical perspective, a dialectical method and a strong sensitivity to the social implications of media technology. According to Innis a sense of history provides an overview for the evaluation of cultural strategies and social change. The dialectical method catches the dynamism of communication practice in which certain groups have a selective advantage over others in getting their messages across. A focus on content clarifies the ways in which different technologies generate vocabularies for speaking about our environment which in turn affect what we attend to and think about. All of these are questions rarely raised by the more empirically-oriented research tradition dominating communications thought south of the border.

McLuhan, according to Theall, adds to Innis' space and time-oriented communication theory the insight that scholarly analysis is at one and the same time "drama" and "explanation". Such a perspective highlights the often overlooked fact that social institutions like the mass media or advertising are collectivities of people organized to attain a

common purpose and aesthetic facts, embodying a spirit or outlook. The differing French and English interpretations of reality during the October crisis are shown in Gertrude Joch Robinson's paper to have had wide-ranging implications for broadcast functioning and national survival in 1970.

Gordon Thompson is another writer who utilizes a hermeneutic rather than a control-oriented approach to the study of communications problems. Faced with the challenge of evaluating a society's future with respect to communications, he chooses to view man's needs rather than technology as the primary problem. Consequently his analysis of the history of communication revolutions from remote antiquity to the recent past reveals three common characteristics. In all communications revolutions stored human experience is made more accessible, the "information space" is increased and the ease with which shared feelings can be discovered is markedly improved. Thompson proposes that these characteristics act as dimensions for describing a society's communications space, where the constraints inherent in the structure of language and the economic impact of the innovations define the outer boundaries of that space.

A second set of common outlooks underlying the arguments of some of the essays is the recognition that regulation is an integral part of all human endeavour. Regulation therefore is viewed as a positive rather than a negative social mechanism, providing for an ordering of social priorities. Frank Peers uses this perspective to trace the ways in which Canadian broadcast regulation shifted from network to content concerns in the past twenty-five years, while Dick MacDonald notes that the lack of regulation has diminished the variety of expression in print. The adverse effects of this diminution is confirmed in the report of the Senate Commission on the Mass Media (the Davey Commission) which documents Canadian dissatisfaction with their print media.

Exclusive commercial support of print and some broadcast media furthermore raises the issue of how social values like accuracy, variety, Canadian production and on-the-spot foreign affairs coverage etc. can be encouraged if their adoption cut into profits. The Davey Commission's recommendation for a press review board has been accepted in only three of Canada's eleven provinces and anti-trust laws have so far been unable to diminish corporate ownership regime, Canada like the United States has paid more attention to distribution hardware than to inputs. But it is precisely the quality of inputs which merit attention and which public regulation in broadcasting has successfully fostered.

Hugo McPherson's paper on cultural policy introduces a third set of themes shared by many Canadian communications analysts: the realization that information and cultural policy are inextricably intertwined. An examination of the history of increasing support for the arts in the last decade as well as the current federal-provincial struggle for control of the new broadcast media (cable, community and educational broadcasting) point up the difficulties in viewing any

information medium or the information media taken collectively as cultural components isolated from the rest of cultural activity. Information media as well as theatres, films, and museums are part of one and the same information system. A balance between centralized and decentralized control is needed to make this system work.

In the realm of information the latest government move to coordinate regulatory decision-making of broadcast technology in the hands of one umbrella organization, the CRTC (the Canadian Radio and Television Commission), seems to be a step in the right direction. In the realm of culture, McPherson, however, recommends a mixed system of control. He argues that support for Canadian cultural endeavours, books and magazines should remain in the hands of concerned citizen boards. To protect the diversity of outlooks in a pluralistic society these should be as much as possible insulated from governmental pressure and ministerial control.

The fourth and final set of common conditions affecting all of the contributors is the absence until recently of a highly organized, formal academic study of communications in Canada. The results of such a situation are manifold. It has meant that scholars continue to work alone in their varied disciplines without much contact and without a forum for the exchange of views. It has also meant that the insights of such precursors as Innis, McLuhan and Grierson who laid the foundation for a new communications theory have not begun to be systematically studied or developed. It has additionally meant that communications research has been preoccupied with technical and hardware issues divorced from their social implications. In the seventies this kind of a division can no longer be countenanced. It blurs the realization that planning a society's communications future is far more than creating a distribution network, it sets the stage for the ways in which future generations will regard and evaluate their environment.

To build a proper structure for the organized, formal study of communications in Canada will require the development of a variety of institutions and institutional programmes. First, there is the need to establish interdisciplinary programmes at major universities to explore and develop the theoretical bases for the study of human communication. Here the best of international communications studies and the scattered insights of Canadian practitioners like Harry Boyle, Patrick Watson and Graham Spry, of historians like Frank Peers and Kesterton, of social scientists like Dallas Smythe, Fred Elkin and Benjamin Singer and of artists like Michael Snow and Ian Baxter, can be brought together and evaluated. Such settings will also provide for the broad critical education which all society requires in order to assume a responsible role in the contemporary world of communications. Second, vigorous journalism programmes will have to be developed in each province to supplement those already established at Carlton, Laval, Western Ontario and Ryerson. These programmes should foster practical reportial skills and develop practitioners with a wide general background who will be able to assess the application of film, print, video, and other technologies to the growing needs of our society.

Finally, communications between scholars and practitioners must continue to improve and, in addition to the currently existing information centre, an association of academics and practitioners should be reconstituted and one or more journals of Canadian communications founded to encourage research and exchange of ideas among ourselves and with international scholars throughout the world. This volume is a tentative first step in that direction, hopefully serving as a starting point for future work.

Montreal
June 1975

Gertrude Joch Robinson
Donald F. Theall

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**Donald F. Theall**
**McGill University**

# Communication Theory and the Marginal Culture: The Socio-Aesthetic Dimensions of Communication Study

> I once had the honour of serving Mr. Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister of Canada. On one occasion he said: "Wouldn't it be a great pity if Canada were to lose her sense of dependence on the Mother Country only to fall into a sense of dependence on what we called at the time 'our good neighbour to the South'; and what in fact are we going to do about it". Well, we did a lot of things. Just one of them was that we set about making the Canadians look to the North and, to that end, we began by changing the maps to focus on the North Pole. That is going to the very root in the changing of attitudes. Of course, there were other things. We multiplied the expeditions into the north, we established better news services from the north, we started on what turned out to be an excellent series of films from the north. It happened the facts of life were on our side. The aeroplane was reaching out into the wilderness and the Pole was becoming in cold hard facts a cross-road of the world. Then we struck uranium and nickel and other minerals. But the important thing for us is this: that in a short period of years the people of Canada were aided and abetted, and of deliberation, in realizing themselves as a people.[1]

The National Film Board's history as an institution is characteristic of the unique shape given to an interest in communication and culture by the nation of Canada as a country. The above epigraph taken from the writings of the founding father of the Board, the Scot, John Grierson, strongly emphasizes the cultural mission implicit in the establishment of the NFB. Such a cultural mission necessarily pervaded the policies and concerns of most Canadian communication institutions since Canada occupied a marginal position to the United States, to Canada and to the European continent. A preoccupation such as that of Mackenzie King's led in the early 50's to the creation of the Royal Commission on Culture, the Massey Commission, and later led to Canada's concern with broadcast regulation, journalism policy and broader communications issues in the reports of the Fowler Commission, the Davey Commission, the Telecommission of the Department of Communications, and the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC).

For similar reasons distinctively Canadian interests and emphases in communication theory developed. Harold Innis writing of the Massey Commission report could share with Grierson an intense interest in the problem of propaganda, for:

> American propaganda after the First World War became more intense in the domestic field. Its effectiveness was evident in the emergence of organizations representing industry, labour, agriculture and other groups...In the depression the American government learned much of the art of propaganda from business and exploited new technological devices such as the radio. With the entry of the United States into the Second World War instruments of propaganda were enormously extended.
>
> The effects of these developments on Canadian culture have been disastrous. Indeed they threaten Canadian national life.[2]

What Innis saw as a systematic attack by "the jackals of communication systems...to destroy every vestige of sentiment toward Great Britain", struck at the "heart of cultural life in Canada", which had to maintain connections with Great Britain and Europe as a means of providing balance and alternatives within the framework of North American culture. Consequently he could strongly recommend that "the dangers to national existence warrant an energetic program to offset them"[3] and he could note that around 1950 in radio through the CBC, in film through the NFB, and to an extent within the universities in the introduction of Canadian literature courses, such a programme was beginning. Innis shared with Grierson and with the Canadian milieu of the 40's a concern with the development of cultural values in the midst of the powerful influence of communications from the United States.

It is in this context that the relevance of Innis' wide-ranging interest in communication and empire should appropriately be viewed. While he turned to history to examine the role of the superstructure in political development, his interest and perspective was being shaped simultaneously by the present and the future as well as the past. Advertising is a major theme and concern to which he returns in each of his major works -- Empire and Communication, The Bias of Communications and Changing Concepts of Time. In his positive discussion of culture, for example, he observes that advertising has a crucial effect in the political sphere:

> Canadians can scarcely understand the attitude of hostility of Europeans toward Americans because of the overwhelming influence upon them of American propaganda. Americans are the best propagandists because they are the best advertisers. Whatever hope of autonomy Canada may have in the future must depend upon her success in withstanding American influence and in assisting the development of a third bloc designed to withstand the pressure of the United States and Russia.[4]

Innis could even argue that in the evolution of the concept of Freedom of the Press through American revolution there was a threat to Canada and that such influence had to be offset through the development of radio, television, film and other cultural institutions. Much of what Innis appears to have thought is quite similar to the programme of the National Film Board as it was outlined by John Grierson and represented in his work on documentary film. Grierson saw the Board

as a force of counter-propaganda and thus as assisting the evolution of a cultural consciousness and cultural values. Grierson in arguing the relationship between Propaganda and Education shares precisely the same concern as Innis:

> (Education) . . . has as a result lost control for the real educational process and it has lost this control to men who govern the newspapers, films, radio, advertising and public relations, few of whom have a licence to teach.
>
> Not all these men have been conscious propagandists, but all have had a propagandist effect by reason of the fact that they have used dramatic or inspirational methods. They have evaluated the good and the bad, the heroic and the unheroic, the exciting and the unexciting, the desirable and undesirable. They have observed things that interested people; they have researched into patterns of report that commanded men's understanding, attention and desire. They have done so in the name of entertainment, news reporting, salesmanship and public instruction, and, except in the case of public information, they have done it for profit. They have not always gone deep or sought to choose the most imaginative and socially valuable pattern, but they have, in fact, provided a system of evaluation for men's daily experience where such a system was lacking. They have consequently created loyalties and formed the pattern of men's thoughts and actions. The headline has been as important in this matter as the editorial; the advertisement and the comic strip as important as the Hollywood epic. They have, to a large extent, taken charge of men's minds. The 'ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive habit of millions,' which Lenin called such a 'terrible force' is largely in their hands. It is, by contrast, not in the hands of the educators.[5]

From very diverse points of view Innis and Grierson, academic and practitioner, theorist and activist, developed parallel analyses through the Canadian experience, an experience which Grierson as a Scot could see in the context of his own country's relation to England.

Advertising and other popular modes such as those outlined by Grierson are the starting point for Marshall McLuhan's interest in communication. As a European-educated Canadian he sees advertising from a marginal perspective rather than from within and the first of his books, The Mechanical Bride, focuses on the "effect of propaganda" by the use of dramatic or inspirational methods where the popular culture purveyor becomes the unconscious propagandist. McLuhan uses the exegesis of these modes of unconscious propaganda as a way of understanding the cultural implications in which they are affecting the consciousness of the American public. As a means of dealing with the "effect of propaganda" he employs a hermeneutic technique dependent on theories of literary analysis stemming from Richards' The Meaning of Meaning and, therefore, indirectly from Malinowski's theories of meaning and context. If Grierson noted that these "unconscious propagandists"

of North America were employing "dramatic or inspirational methods," McLuhan used the modes of rhetorical and aesthetic analysis as a way of examining their effect.

The Mechanical Bride attempted to control the flux of propaganda by arresting its movement. Selecting individual objects or events for examination and contemplation, McLuhan illustrated the way in which the social and cultural message of the United States was being carried through its popular culture. His ability to do this, though, was conditioned as in the cases of Innis and Grierson by looking at the U.S. from the marginal perspective of Canada. McLuhan speaking of his own method in the introduction of the Bride had said:

> A film expert, speaking of the value of the movie medium for selling North American to South America noted that: the propaganda value of this simultaneous audio-visual impression is very high, for it standardizes thought by supplying the spectator with a ready-made visual image before he has time to conjure up an interpretation of his own.
>
> This book reverses that process by providing typical visual imagery of our environment and dislocating it into meaning by inspection. Where visual symbols have been employed in an effort to paralyze the mind, they are here used as a means of energizing it.[6]

McLuhan's stance is that of an observer or spectator, a position dictated by the marginal relationship of Canada to the American empire. This theme of American empire runs through Innis' work particularly in essays such as "The Strategy of Culture", "Military Implications of the American Constitution", and "Great Britain, the United States and Canada". Innis' interest in Empire and Communications rose directly out of his understanding of North American history and his vantage point of observation in Canada. As our opening epigraph suggests, media practitioners and analysts such as Grierson and politicians such as Mackenzie King were equally aware of the problem posed by the growth of communication monopolies in relation to American dominance. The communication theory that arose in Canada, therefore, arose to a considerable extent as a strategy of culture and consequently the theorists concerned themselves with questions of a cultural nature and with a critique of the conflicting demands of British, Continental and U.S. traditions.

In undertaking this the theorists and the communications institutions, especially the CBC and the NFB, adopted an activist point of view. Innis lamented that the universities were failing to play their proper role in the cultural crisis and argued that:

> It...(culture)...is designed to train the individual to decide how much information he needs, and how little he needs, to give him a sense of balance and proportion, and to protect him from the fanatic who tells him that Canada will be lost to the Russians

> unless he knows more geography or more history or more economics or more science. Culture is concerned with the capability of the individual to appraise problems in terms of space and time and with enabling him to take the proper steps at the right time.[7]

This certainly would locate the point at which McLuhan's interest in such problems begins, for he graduated from Cambridge influenced by the Leavis school and even more strongly influenced by the British painter-critic Wyndham Lewis.

Whatever the limitations of the positions of various individual Canadian scholars who considered these problems, the situation forced them to adopt a markedly different approach from most U.S. scholars, except those like Kenneth Burke. First of all the Canadian's approach necessarily had to stress the role of interpretation at every level in understanding the processes of communication. Professor Wilks, writing of Innis' study on The Fur Trade in Canada insisted that his scholarly energy rose out of "his love of bringing interpretative order out of the factual chaos produced by his own massive research."[8]

Grierson argued the whole case for documentary in terms of the fact that documentary art is interpretation, and the essence of communication and propaganda is involved with interpretation. McLuhan's unique contribution to communication studies is to open up potentially the entire range of strategies of aesthetic interpretation to objects, events and processes involved in human communications.

At this time, Canada also produced a wide variety of other individuals associated with a concern for communications from an interpretative point of view. Eric Havelock, whose Preface to Plato McLuhan and Innis quote, spent the formative part of his academic career in Canada and later at Harvard produced an analysis of the transition from the oral to the written in Greek culture using a hermeneutic approach to Plato, Homer and Hesiod. More recently younger Canadian scholars such as Tony Wilden have applied interpretative methods to the deeper epistemological questions involved in communication theory.

The Canadian situation led to the development of an interpretative approach to history and to the events of the present, because any cultural strategy required a process of understanding and evaluation. In "A Critical Review" Innis, invoking the support of Graham Wallas, suggested that:

> He pointed to the danger that knowledge was growing too vast for successful use in social judgement . . . He assumed that creative thought was dependent on the oral tradition and that the conditions favorable to it were gradually disappearing with the increasing mechanization of knowledge . . . The quantitative pressure of modern knowledge has been responsible for the decay of oral dialectic and conversation.[9]

Innis saw all of his later work in part as a plea for the oral tradition, for an oral dialectic and for the values of conversation. McLuhan, though apparently in sharper contrast to Innis since he ultimately embraces the world of advertising and propaganda, argues nevertheless that the nature of the new media lead to reintroducing an oral tradition as a natural by-product. In the final analysis, the difference between Innis and McLuhan is one of theory and values, but first of all, like Innis, McLuhan emphasized interpretation and a dialectic approach as the way to come to terms with the modern world. This inconsistency in McLuhan created the intense paradoxes which exist between what his work suggests and what it purports to support. An emphasis on a sense of interpretation and a sense of dialectics was shared with the theorists in the practice of the newer media in Canada, for one of the purposes of CBC Public Affairs and of the Film Board had been to stimulate the conversational dialogue which Innis desired and which seemed to be required as a way of offsetting the growing American propaganda capability. This is clear in views of those such as Grierson who stressed the need for activists. An education that is activist, which Grierson said all education must be, cannot be pursued in what he called the "old way":

> ...we are discovering that the only methods which will convey the nature of the new society are dramatic methods. That is why the documentary film has achieved such unique importance in the new world of education. It does not teach the world by analysing it. Uniquely and for the first time it communicates the new world by showing it in its corporate and living nature.[10]

Interpretation as developed by Innis at a theoretical level or by McLuhan in his exegesis is not analysis in the usually accepted sense of explanation. It is instead a dramatic method for dealing with the dynamic material and dynamic events that present themselves in the social study of communications. This centrality of drama to interpretation though only implicit at times in Innis' and McLuhan's writings, naturally emerges out of the social conflicts between different demands that create the movement of human history. A sense of this leads both Innis and McLuhan to being concerned with aesthetic questions in their pursuit of their respective concerns with social communication.

Innis, in developing his theories from the work of Graham Wallas (to whom he specifically attributes an important influence on his later work), was participating in a viewpoint which took conscious account of the importance of the aesthetic. In Social Judgement, a work which Innis specifically quotes, Wallas was most concerned with the effect of "aesthetic diffusion" on the "social heritage". In fact, Wallas, unlike McLuhan, saw a positive value in printing on just such aesthetic grounds:

> The degradation of an aesthetic "pattern" by the loss of its "spirit" in the successive stages of copying has been lessened in the modern world by the invention of printing and by our

> new skill in preserving and reproducing works of art. But the fact remains that aesthetic diffusion has always been and still is much less successful than the diffusion of the applied science, and the fact is partly due to the greater success of the scientist from the time of Archimedes onward, in explaining his creative methods.[11]

Wallas saw a relation between this problem of "aesthetic diffusion" and the problem of the learning of "patterns" of government. The "patterns" of British government were being diffused throughout the rest of the world:

> But few of them have learnt the obscure processes of human motives which alone made it possible to work those institutions and principles in the countries of their origin. And unless we can make those processes clear to ourselves, we may have lost the secret of their value before we cease exporting their forms.[12]

This interest with "spirit" rather than merely with "pattern" and his accompanying emphasis on "aesthetic diffusion" may seem far removed from what we would call "political science" today, yet it led directly to Innis' awareness not only of the external forms of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Byzantium and the like, but also the "spirit" and "inner form" which permeated the institutions and forms of media created by these cultures.

From his interest in the "art of thought" Wallas had developed an interest in the "social heritage" of the nations that formed the "great society", the European industrial world of the early Twentieth Century. He had seen the success of that "heritage" involved in the "art" of thinking and especially on the retention of flexibility and creativity. This kind of emphasis quite obviously parallels that of Innis on the "oral tradition", the value of conversation and dialogue. But more important Wallas bequeathed to Innis the way of seeing that institutions were "aesthetic" facts in their most important dimensions, because the art of politics, the art of thinking and the art of social judgement were intimately involved with a synthesis of reason and emotion. These processes, which Wallas certainly saw as related to the dramatic — "the emotional-intellectual process of poetic creations" -- can only be understood in terms similar to the descriptions of "motives" which Kenneth Burke found central to history, poetry and communications.

Innis and McLuhan, as well as practitioners such as Grierson, took such insights more seriously than many of their American counterparts. That they raised such interpretative questions about communication more readily than many of their British counterparts was chiefly owing to the Canadian perspective being conditioned by its marginal cultural position, a situation which led to attempts to "understand" rather than to "control" communications institutions.

Obviously Wallas' Fabian Marxism and his recognition of aesthetics attracted Canadians quite readily. "Culture", after all, as a social construct is shaped according to the same rules of "art" as other man-made artifacts and art differs primarily only in its freedom to explore so that the process of interpretation of the arts automatically provided ways of understanding "culture", a message which evolved under rather different circumstances in the social sciences of the U.S. and then only through the contributions of the pragmatist tradition -- Dewey, Peirce, Mead, Burke, etc., leading to contributions of symbolic interactionists and to an interest in problems of the "social construction of reality". Applied directly to social communications the work of Innis and McLuhan earlier provided such an approach with a historical depth and dialectical sensitivity that unfortunately was not too frequently grasped or appreciated, a sensitivity specifically concerned with the main area of discourse in communications study -- the oral and written traditions, the nature and influence of media, the relationship between culture and technology and the aesthetic dimensions of communications.

Social judgement as Innis had learned from Wallas and from the oral tradition is a prudential art. Like "criticism" it is an art based on comparison and analysis generated through comparison. Since judgement and criticism were crucial factors in the evolution of a way of approaching the problems of the cultural superstructure in the United States the strategies of art became important in the process. Early works by McLuhan, even if marred by many of the flaws which eventually resulted in disaster (as elaborated in my book The Medium is the Rear View Mirror), pursue this strategy and often pursue it with a close proximity to the work of Innis. The Gutenberg Galaxy with its yearning for a historical perspective approaches closer than any of his others to an Innis-oriented book and it is in this book that McLuhan discusses the nature of what he describes as "the Innis mode".

> There is nothing wilful or arbitrary about the Innis mode of expression. Were it to be translated into perspective prose, it would not only require huge space, but insight into the modes of interplay among forms of organization would also be lost. Innis sacrificed point of view and prestige to his sense of the urgent need for insight. A point of view can be a dangerous luxury when substituted for insight and understanding. As Innis got more insights he abandoned any mere point of view in his presentation of knowledge. When he inter-relates the development of the steam press with "the consolidation of the vernaculars" and the rise of nationalism and revolution he is not reporting anybody's point of view, least of all his own. He is setting up a mosaic configuration or galaxy for insight.[13]

In McLuhan's mind this would relate Innis to a long tradition of essayists beginning with Montaigne and Bacon and developing through Pascal, who designed a prose form for painting the mind in the action of thinking through a subject rather than merely presenting results. The end of such a process is a hermeneutic one for it is directed toward "in-

sight" and "understanding", which presumably is achieved by ways of presenting subjects that will allow for the illustration of the maximum inter-relatedness. McLuhan in the context cites an example from The Bias of Communication:

> The varied rate of development of communication facilities has accentuated difficulties of understanding. The cable compelled contraction of language and facilitated a rapid widening between the English and American languages. In the vast realm of fiction in the Anglo-Saxon world, the influence of the newspaper and such recent developments as cinema and the radio has been evident in the bestseller and the creation of special classes of readers with little prospect of communication between them.[14]

The linking of the relation or interplay between literary and non-literary forms made possible by Innis' mode of writing permits a more penetrating presentation of what is at stake in the dialectical processes involved in the growth of communications. By this means Innis provides a shaped or designed picture or a map of a set of phenomena which reveal the dynamics of the history he is exploring. McLuhan compares this with Joycean prose.

It is apparent from McLuhan's description that he tended to overemphasize the "artistic" aspects of Innis' method, though there was surely some grounds for doing this in terms of the theories which Innis had developed from Wallas. A prime contemporary task resulting from McLuhan's failure is the need to re-examine and re-justify this process which is closely tied to the problems of interpretation discussed above.

My own studies of McLuhan presented in The Medium is the Rear View Mirror were precisely directed at attempting to extricate the "humanist" values from the general "technological determinism" which McLuhan developed. The "humanist" values, as my appendix on "The Influence of the Canadian University Milieu" demonstrated, were the result of the Canadian situation and the milieu in which McLuhan worked, but the significance of these should have been generalizable for they were interpretations of a tradition shared by Western scholars applied to a new series of problems. McLuhan essentially had extended Innis by discovering in the works of James Joyce, an Irish writer (and therefore like Grierson, and the Canadians themselves, a product of a marginal culture) strategies for using artistic creativity as a means of social discovery and cultural scholarship. This enabled McLuhan to even more strongly appeal to intellectuals in Québec where he has had such major followers as Jacques Languirand, who helped shape the ideas of the Man in the Community Pavilion at Expo as well as writing De Pythagore à McLuhan; Jean Paris, the French translater of his works, and Jean Cloutier whose work on communications and education was strongly influenced by McLuhan. Québec contacts with Innis are remote and often only by way of McLuhan's work, for Innis is by no means sympathetic to Québec nationalism. But McLuhan even seized the imagination of film-makers in Québec such as Claude Jutra, among many others at

the National Film Board.

The future of whatever began in Canadian communications theory with Innis must be achieved by developing a criticism of McLuhan which will preserve the major features of McLuhan's "humanist" approach, for the very essence of this approach has been involved in a "critique" of the consensus among U.S. students of communication. Yet that approach must be turned upside down and located in a proper social and cultural theory. Where McLuhan failed was in being seduced into supporting that U.S. consensus, while developing a series of strategies that were actually subversive and critical of the consensus. It is precisely those areas of Innis which McLuhan leaves out — the sense of history, the sense of dialectics, the stress on values and the sense of the role of culture and society — which must necessarily be restored. Some relative success in practice by those associated with Canadian institutions in this area has been achieved. They have often been able to criticize through their actions evolutions occurring south of the border. Consequently, Norman McLaren's presence at the Film Board is in one aspect a critique of Disney; This Hour Has Seven Days (possibly CBC's most successful public affairs show) was a critique of the pseudo-electronic public affairs magazines in the U.S., and even within a strictly commercial activity such as Expo 67, the Canadian contribution of a film such as "Man in the Polar Regions" became a critique of the extensive pre-occupation with commercialism and technology over aesthetics and a sensitivity for social environment.

Innis, perhaps unconsciously, had evolved a method which as McLuhan realized was related to the arts and the "art of criticism". Innis would select from the whole range of history radically different cultural complexes involving the principles of empire and communication and from these complexes he would be able to bring forth a vision of the way in which the social forms, the political forms, the technological forms and the conceptual forms were culturally inter-related. His so-called cryptic style of writing really resulted from the problems created by having to inter-relate such complex phenomena which could not be simply reduced to some single process of cause and effect. This appears to be the point from which McLuhan started when he argued that Innis was non-linear, and therefore a representative of the new age who was rebelling against the linearity of print. The problem in speaking by way of the metaphor of linearity was that it eventually led to McLuhan badly mixing his metaphors. Ultimately the decision was political, for it was associated with McLuhan's interpretation of the central role of the tradition of the Catholic Church and Catholic philosophy (traditional cultural monopolies in Innis' sense of the term) in an understanding of the new world of "electronic communications".

Nevertheless in specific ways Innis' method could be said to be non-linear because it was dialectical and it dealt with complex clusters of fact. Any approach to communication must of necessity similarly restore such a sense of dialectics if it is not to become ensnared in some monolithic approach to human behaviour, technology or another

such given which always conceals the relevant shaping features of history and the forms of social and technological relations in how communication actually works. As James Carey has pointed out elsewhere in this volume, Innis shows clearly that the clause concerning freedom of the press in the constitution occupies a very ambivalent place in the history of communications, because it became as much the guarantee of a certain kind of monopoly of knowledge as a means to genuine liberation of individual citizens. Such an insight conditions the whole way we look at the communication process, from an understanding of the causes as to why new media appear in the way they do, to the shaping of editorial policy and the methods of explaining articles concerning politics or government. "Dependence on the front page has left its stamp on American political life in the character of personalities and of legislation..."[15] "The effects of the new journalism reflected in the demands of advertisers for circulation and excitement were particularly striking in foreign policy"[16] "In the United States the dominance of the newspapers was accompanied by a ruthless shattering of language, the invention of new idioms and the sharpening of words."[17] That these interpretations are derivable from the more fundamental history in which the press achieved a favoured position, provides a fuller understanding of the operation of such effects than could be achieved by any other interpretative procedure. Consequently, the more adequate aspects of McLuhan's work and the work of Innis which complement or supplement each other need to be related to the critical context in which they developed and to be further developed while keeping the perspective of marginality in mind.

The remainder of this argument, therefore, will be prospective in nature, suggesting the directions in which the contributions arising from the Canadian scene ought to be developed. First of all it is necessary to stress that McLuhan oversimplified Innis when he reduced the whole question of form in the media to a question of the technological means of transmission. Innis certainly considered technology important, but he considered any technology to be rooted in a context and it was ultimately the context that mattered not the mere fact of an individual technology. Consequently, when McLuhan speaks about a print bias he is reducing a thorough consideration of a complex set of phenomena to a single causal circumstance. This is what can be so misleading about McLuhan, since when he shifts his focus from the analysis of the technology in vacuo, a technique he so frequently uses, to an analysis of the way that the technology manifests itself in social facts, his work is usually more penetrating and sensitive. Take one problem which he first considered in The Mechanical Bride -- the structure of the newspaper and the kind of structure that it favours for thinking and emotional attitudes. This is a concern McLuhan shared with Innis, with Graham Wallas who preceded Innis, as well as with Wyndham Lewis, a contemporary of McLuhan and Innis, whose work influenced both men.

McLuhan analyzes the newspaper in terms of the juxtaposition of items within the make-up of a page of the paper. He relates this to the interest of Mallarmé and other symbolist poets in both the press and in intellectual landscapes -- landscapes of the mind instead of the body. As McLuhan develops his analysis from its first stages in The Mechanical

Bride, next in articles in Explorations and then in The Gutenberg Galaxy and Understanding Media, he demonstrates how the perceptual shape of the newspaper which contributes to structuring consciousness in the society, is related to a wide variety of other social phenomena ranging from film, the arts, the doctrines of surrealists and the time philosophy of the advertising world, to the pragmatism of Dewey and the commitments of American business. It is even broadened in literary articles to demonstrate the understanding that poets and writers had of the phenomena involved in the newspaper in such articles as "Joyce, Mallarmé, and the Press McLuhan's power is in relating the technical problems which shape the newspaper page and those journalistic techniques that impose themselves on other cultural phenomena occurring in the broader social context within which newspapers take on life and have their influence.

Themes such as juxtaposition, discontinuity, fragmentation, participation through contemplation, all come to be woven into the analysis for they are proper components of the shape of the newspaper. Behind this there is naturally a web of technology which contributes to that shape -- the telegraph, colour printing, the demands of make-up, the economics of advertising and the like. Consequently, some of these factors which are immediately related to technology tend to appear from time to time in McLuhan's analysis such as the role of telegraph, telex, xerox, photographic techniques, make-up and the like. But unfortunately the equally important factors related to social, political and economic conditions tend to be left out of his explanation even though they are just as genuinely present in the artifact -- the newspaper itself.

Innis, like McLuhan, was deeply interested in the newspaper. In a wide variety of essays as well as in the closing chapter of Empire and Communications he stressed the importance of journalism in shaping contemporary political and social situations. His analysis takes into account the very factors which are left out in the McLuhan analysis. Innis can illustrate the paradoxical role of American insistence on the freedom of the press, its roots in economic and political situations, its relationship to a revolutionary society in contradistinction to the counter-revolutionary society of Canada. In relation to such an analysis Innis can also raise questions concerning fragmentation of thought and language, the discontinuity of social perception and the transformation of the texture and depth of language. Yet he is not able immediately to relate this to the aesthetic shape of the paper itself as an object that manifests the mode by which consciousness is partially restructured through the agency of each paper.

Innis can speak of the way in which the newspaper generates its own transformation or demise as a monopoly in terms of the way that its monopoly gradually generates its opposition -- the first is, of course, the radio -- but he does not relate his analysis to a direct examination of the structure and content of the particular objects, which are individual newspapers. What McLuhan adds, therefore, and what we

must examine, is a way of deriving cultural meanings from the objects themselves. Yet McLuhan's analysis requires a way of developing an understanding of that object's context to include all the phenomena at play in the process by which newspapers are one type of medium which structures social consciousness. To return from McLuhan to Innis and the marginality of the Canadian social context is to provide a critique of such deficiencies in McLuhan's work.

What McLuhan and Innis provide is a basis for being able to examine questions by a means of a methodology that is broadly interpretative. An analysis of the content of the paper by statistical methods will never be able to inter-relate the complex variables involved, though it obviously has a usefulness in providing some verification of insights about quantitative factors concerning immediately recognizable content or established facts about external social factors. Innis' work, however, would seem to indicate that the phenomenon of fragmentation and the introduction of discontinuity in the structure of papers is as central to their social and political effect as the actual statements that can be extracted from the articles. Even in particular newspapers articles the processes by which the association of news with telegraphic communication reduces language in certain ways, and the demands of editing and make-up create important mental habits and emotional attitudes. These effects are not measurable in terms of the usual studies of content, even though such factors may even have short-run effects in creating depth or ambivalence of meaning, as any of McLuhan's readings of a front page would suggest.

This example of the newspaper is meant to suggest sketchy guidelines of the direction in which a full scale interpretation of human communications could evolve from what is suggested by Canadian theory and practice. It suggests that successful interpretation begins with a critical stance and the use of a negative dialectic, which are unconscious instruments in some of McLuhan's work and far more conscious instruments in Innis. In the process the entire phenomenon under study is approached by methods which are essentially artistic and which therefore recognize that the major components of communication study are themselves strongly aesthetic in nature. In such an examination the work of the philosophers of the Frankfurt school, who themselves occupied a marginal position to the United States by continuing to write in German after their emigration, would be of great usefulness -- Marcuse for aspects of the aesthetic, Adorno for aspects of the dialectic procedures as well as the aesthetic, and Habermas for specific discussions of interpretation and communications. But what Innis and McLuhan have done would still supplement such work since their ideas are specific and detailed, demonstrating a great awareness of the objects and events involved in contemporary communications.

If Innis made a plea for time and for a recognition of the bias of communication, the next state should be a recognition of what Grierson suggested early in the development of such discussions -- the central importance of the aesthetic factors and a sense of the dramatic method. The American experience has provided Canada with a natural context of

drama when trying to achieve a self-understanding in relation to processes in Europe and the United States. Such a process of self-understanding has two levels as illustrated in the example of the newspaper. The first level is a semiotic-aesthetic level, the second level is an historical-dialectical level. The significance of the historical level only becomes clear through an encounter (implicitly or explicitly) with the first level that manifests the details of practice. Therefore, Innis is as concerned as McLuhan with questions of the effect of language, and formal considerations of make-up and style and the like in the evolution of newspapers, although he does not provide the detailed insights on which to base his broader historical presentation. For this reason it is difficult to detach Innis from the particularities in which his work evolved and to apply it to other types of practice. Once such work is confronted with ways of handling the details of actual practice and with the kind of concern for the level of detail and practice manifested in McLuhan's better analyses, its interpretative potential is more readily understood.

McLuhan and Innis have both suffered from critical reductionism in discussions of their work, though part of the fault for this must be blamed on McLuhan's own tendency to invite such "reductionist" analysis. Yet once it is realized that they are working in a context which is dramatic because it is practical as well as theoretical, the ambivalence implicit in the complexities with which they have to deal becomes more understandable. For this reason the work they began invites further development through the use of a dramatistic analysis of communication such as that suggested by Roland Barthes in Mythologies and other works. Their major contribution in one way was their unself-conscious discovery of the value of Canada as a marginal culture from which to study the central phenomena of the contemporary world. McLuhan later tried to crystallize this in his concept of the DEW Line, Canada as an Early Warning System, but it is another metaphor he never explored very far beyond the level of assertion.

This phenomenon of marginality provides a natural negative perspective which, as Burke simultaneously recognized, was essential for the comprehension of symbolic phenomena. Such a negative perspective arising naturally and unselfconsciously provides a natural dramatic context which invites a use of a dialectical method of exploration. The dialectical method thriving in a context of requiring comparison both between Canada and Europe leads simultaneously to theoretic investigation and to practical confrontation of facts and of the particularities in which the facts are rooted; since they are symbolic particularities even when they have material form, they are at the same time aesthetic and consequently works of human art. The Canadian communicators, theoretical and practical, have discovered in a more particularized context Dewey's insight of the intimate relationship between art and communication, but in the process they have given to Dewey's insight a historical and an aesthetic detail which is important.

An acute awareness of the dramatic method implicit in the processes of communication is a necessary prolegomena to further development of what started in the Canadian scene. The fact that it never reached a very clear articulation as such in Innis, and that McLuhan for reasons I have outlined elsewhere failed to develop it, caused the loss of that quality which Grierson had stressed earlier as essential to all understanding of the contemporary world. Grierson as a member of one marginal culture living and participating in another, was acutely aware that the productions of communicators in a "marginal" culture had to be dramatic if they were to be relevant to that culture's goals. For example, the Film Board, as Grierson recognized, played a role in the growing Canadian consciousness of the North, a consciousness which had to be developed in counterpoint to the growing American commitment to urbanization and closed frontiers in the thirties and forties. Interestingly enough this concern filmmakers had with Canadian waterways and railroads paralleled the concern that led Innis from studying the Canadian Pacific Railway to studies of the fur trade and cod fishing industries and then to the global history of communications and the processes of empire. Innis, through the process of criticizing North American history by rewriting it, developed a "critical" approach to communications.

When pursuing a role which is "critical" in all senses of the word, Canadian media have succeeded best, but this is a role that frequently leads to internal difficulties as well as external ones. This Hour Has Seven Days, for example, could translate the national drama of Canada vs. the United States into terms of a "national" drama within the country, that of Québec vs. Canada, by the strategy of interviews with leading Québecois politicians such as René Levesque or Jean Lesage. A CBC drama in a series such as Quest in the 1960's could produce Creeping Arnold, a drama directed at criticism of the U.S. draft and militarism. A programme such as Seven Days could develop an open-ended, dialectical style which it incidentally attributed to the influence of McLuhan's writings and called an "electronic magazine" precisely because the shaping of a Canadian perspective of necessity involved the making of a critic. The goals of the analysis in the practice of Seven Days could strikingly and unselfconsciously parallel the historical analyses of American empire found in works of Innis such as "Military Implications of the United States Constitution" (rather prophetically written in 1952) or "Great Britain, the United States and Canada." CBC Public Affairs' freedom from advertising served at least as a short term protection from the intrusion of the influences existing on U.S. media, but Seven Days' criticisms eventually aroused the concern of a Parliament highly sensitive to the business community. The issue that should interest us here though is the natural dialectical position which arises in Canada as a result of the socio-political situation when such problems are considered.

What Innis, Grierson, McLuhan and others have achieved should be a beginning not an end. There have been hesitant steps and periodic misdirections, such as the way in which McLuhan's work evolved. But that does not mean the essential movement represented by such activity is incorrect. In a broader context the contributions of Harry Boyle,

Northrop Frye, Jacques Languirand, Jean Cloutier, Dallas Smythe, Patrick Watson and many others ought to be examined. For the present though let us see what major points ought to be stressed in the constructive development of the tradition that we have been examining.

First of all, there would be a strong emphasis on the historical method in approaching problems of communication. Where McLuhan gains his strength is from his vast erudition regarding history and where he most often goes wrong is in over-simplifying or misapplying historical analysis. Although he attempts to turn history against itself, to use time to undermine time in terms of a commitment to space, which Innis would criticize, one of his major strengths comes from his sense of time. Such an historical method would involve a balancing of external and internal history -- the history of movements with which Innis was preoccupied and the history of detail and texture, which, in essays such as his studies of the Eighteenth Century publishing industry or Nineteenth and Twentieth Century American journalism, he found to be essential. McLuhan's detailed handling of moments in the history of communication as praxis, such as his literary studies of the "trivium", demonstrate the need to round out such internal history with an analysis of meaning, a coming to terms with understanding through the signs provided within cultural objects and events.

Second, there would be an overt recognition of the use of a comparative method, for the dramatic existence of culture within a world where interaction is requisite makes any understanding necessarily comparative anayway. McLuhan's work takes on an "ambivalent" and improved dimension dislocated from his biases when it is viewed as a technique for comparison rather than merely a technique of analysis. His verbal play, his comic complexity (though ultimately, as I suggested in The Medium is the Rear View Mirror resulting in a regressive position) are present as a means of removing the American object from the American context as a way of understanding it and presumably arresting their uncontrolled effect on people. Our developing theory, though, must be founded on a breadth of comparison as well as detailed comparisons and this is where the "dialectical" work of Innis excels in counterpointing time and space, democratic city and dominated empire, priestly monopoly generating its own critical gestures or undoers and over-specialized technology creating the need for counter-balancing technologies, and the like. But such currents can only become clear through comparison, whether the comparison is in ancient times of Egypt, Greece and Rome or in more recent times of England, France, Canada and the United States. One is talking, however, about more than comparative studies in communications; one is talking about studies where the "drama" of human relations becomes central to the way the study is pursued. Furthermore one is talking about comparison at levels ranging from the consideration of major trends and movements down to particular textural effects. The wisdom of an oral tradition can only be found in the type of detailed analysis of what the roles of memory and rhetoric in an oral world are as well as the ways in which the legal system generated by such oral strategies differs from a legal system more dependent on writing and codification.[18]

Third, there must be a theory accounting for the dramatic and aesthetic. Though it is not as immediately apparent in Innis, like McLuhan he developed a way of approaching the grammar and rhetoric and symbolic of cultural events and institutions. Part of this manifests itself through his sense of fact, the way he can weave precise details together with major trends. This sense of fact on which most of his commentators have dwelt is also a sense of the aesthetic feeling, the shape and the nature of consciousness produced by diverse phenomena--what McLuhan calls the Innis method or the mosaic method. The relevant selection and arrangement of facts in combination produce an awareness of the processes of criticism and change at work. Statistics about advertising, Roosevelt's remarks about radio, Orson Welles' famous Mars programme, the relation between advertisers and newspapers and the growing demand for entertainment can all become part of a "mosaic" which indicates the way in which radio in its rapid rise as a medium is shaped by a reaction to newspaper monopoly as well as itself shaping a new consciousness of political and social power. Such analyses are not only more central than detailed statistics concerning specific programming, they are also essential to interpreting or understanding what those statistics are actually about. Therefore, although McLuhan developed his method from different sources it is easy to see that he could attribute it as well to Innis, except that Innis' humanism, unlike McLuhan's, saw that in understanding the phenomena of communications it was essential to come to an understanding of society as well as an understanding of particular objects, or, more precisely, to come to an understanding of the process of interaction concerned.

Fourth, there is a need for a dialectical awareness of "holism" and "atomism". Although McLuhan has frequently been associated with a "holistic" approach to communications, what we develop from this must recognize again the perpetual tension between atomistic techniques of analysis and holistic rhetoric which permeates his work. Innis' corrective, and the corrective contained in the practice of Grierson and others, is to recognize the dialectical interaction between whole and part which permits the simultaneous awareness of both in any approach to communication, partly because whole and part as definable goals are themselves in motion. When McLuhan through his literary wit can convert the whole from a nation to the globe and produce his concept of a global theatre, he is raising the question about wholes and parts but rather than exploring it he attempts to stifle it. Innis and Grierson, though nationalists in a strong sense, were aware of the interactive problem of nationalism and internationalism in a way in which subsequent analysis seems to have failed.

Fifth and last, marginality must be explicitly recognized as a strength in intellectual criticism. Innis, McLuhan, the National Film Board, the CBC, the CRTC and other individuals and institutions represent a distinct culture and cultural awareness in the communications area. Marginality, since it is sensitive to the need for a negative perspective and results in a natural dramatistic approach to problems, provides a rich basis for cultural development. Innis was able to anticipate so many critics of the contemporary scene in prophesizing

the problems of American militarism because he did use that "critical" perspective without embarrassment or reservation.

McLuhan could develop his humanism and his aesthetic interpretation just to the point where he was able to retain such a perspective. He failed when he relinquished it by uncritically participating in the apocalypse of the electronic revolution which James Carey has so accurately described. Much of what might have been lost can be restored, though, by returning McLuhan to the Canadian setting and placing him in a critical encounter with the work of Innis and Grierson and the practice of Canadian communications institutions. What then opens up as a possible evolution is a developing theoretical orientation rich in historical knowledge and rich in aesthetic awareness combining the two axes along which communications can be studied in its particular embeddedness in human society. The dialectic that would emerge would balance the virtues of the oral and written tradition, restoring the sense of dialogue to the study of communication and perhaps bringing the flight of Minerva's Owl to a lengthy if not a permanent halt owing to an increased understanding of that "ecology of mind", as Gregory Bateson describes it, which is essential to any human realization of a society based on an awareness of ecology and communications.

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# Canadian Communication Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis

Despite the simplification, it is possible to describe Canadian communication theory by an arc running from Harold Innis to Marshall McLuhan. "It would be more impressive", as Oscar Wilde said staring up at Niagara Falls, "if it ran the other way". McLuhan took Innis' economic and political theory of communications and stretched it out to encompass modern literary theory as well. Perhaps "stretched" is not the right verb, for when McLuhan finished with Innis little remained of economics and politics that was recognizable. McLuhan's original motive was sound enough: it was necessary to dislodge Innis' work from its rather too geographical and material base and move it toward a more inclusive cultural analysis. That work still remains to be done, though it is refreshing to see Canadian scholars such as Donald Theall attempting it once again.[1]

While it may be unfair, then, to say that Canadian communication theory ended with Innis, it certainly began with him. Innis' work represents the distinctively Canadian effort to erect a theory of communications that is true to the realities of Canadian existence yet possesses, as well, applicability to the history of communications in other countries and on other continents. While his work is often opaque, often tedious, often badly written, he left a body of historical and theoretical speculation that sets out the major dimensions of communications history and the critical propositions of communication theory. Much remains to be done, of course, both in moving outward to a more systematic cultural analysis and in altering the entire framework to fit subsequent advances in the social sciences. Yet I have no doubts concerning the singularity and power of his achievement.

Now I realize this view is not widely shared in American scholarship. There are at least two reasons why Innis' work has had little impact on American thought. First, in the United States a monopoly of knowledge has grown up that has successfully resisted the penetration of Canadian scholarship generally and Canadian communication theory specifically. For example, an international conference on communications technology and social policy held in Philadelphia in 1972 was remarkable for, among other things, the virtual absence of any reference to Harold Innis, or for that matter the work of virtually any other Canadian scholar.[2] It was not merely that Innis' name and work went uncited, but the principal concepts and propositions of his scholarship made no dent on the proceedings, and were missing from the papers even of those persons familiar with the work. The conference papers, while often useful, were almost universally ahistorical, proceeding

as if Canadian and other national traditions had not addressed the very problems before the conference. While several essays surveyed the positive potentials of modern communications technology, few emphasized the limitations of communications technology in ameliorating social problems, the bias inherent in technology, the monopoly of knowledge supported by various communication technologies and the formulations which support them. While economics entered several analyses, it was largely as cost/benefit analysis and not in terms of the larger questions of social change, selective advantage, cultural stability and collapse that were at the center of Innis' work. Similarly, politics entered the discussions largely in terms of the mechanics of decision making and rule rather than in terms of the legitimacy of authority. Finally, while every methodology was implicitly or explicitly utilized, dialectics was ignored even by those participants with commitments to Marxism. These are, of course, the central terms of Innis: limitation, bias, monopoly, change, stability, collapse, legitimacy, dialectics.

While the conference was international in scope, its proceedings, as befits its location, were dominated by Americans. In the United States a virtual monopoly of knowledge exists that dictates that the central terms of communication theory must derive from psychological behaviorism or a distorted species of pragmatism and this monopoly virtually excludes serious attention to Innis' work.

There is a second reason that Innis has had relatively little impact on American scholarship. While this second factor is but a reverse of the first, it is particularly relevant to the larger purposes I wish to pursue here.

Innis not only was a Canadian by citizenship but wrote against the background of Canadian history and in terms of Canadian needs and necessities. He was in no sense a simple minded nationalist, but he did believe that social science inevitably reflected an ethnocentric bias. In a certain sense he accepted the bias of the printing press and tried to overcome it. He recognized that scholarship was not produced in a historical and cultural vacuum but reflects the hopes and aspirations of national cultures. American and British scholarship was based, he thought, on a conceit: it pretended to discover Universal Truth, to proclaim Universal Laws and to describe a Universal Man. Upon inspection it appeared, however, its Universal Man resembled a type found around Cambridge, Massachusetts, or Cambridge, England; its Universal Laws resembled those felt to be useful by Congress and Parliament; and its Universal Truth bore English and American accents. Imperial powers, so it seems, seek to create not only economic and political clients but intellectual clients as well. And client states adopt, often for reasons of status and power, the perspectives on economics, politics, communication, even on human nature promulgated by the dominant power. While this argument can be converted into a vulgar Marxism, that was not the tactic of Innis, as I hope to show.

Innis believed that Canada's role in the world was to be poised

between the two largest modern empires, the British and American. He put forward what we would now identify as a "third world" position, although that of course was not precisely his intent. Canadian intellectuals, Innis felt, should use their position between the British and American empires as the starting point of their work. They should use social science and history to build a series of interpretations and "laws" that would maintain the integrity of Canadian experience and maintain its autonomous existence in the face of intellectual imperialism. Again, he did not argue this solely for reasons of cultural nationalism, although he often has been read that way. He felt that the great task of Canadian intellectuals was to correct the bias of British and American scholarship and to blunt its penetration into spheres where it had no explanatory significance. In cultural matters Niagara Falls, to use again Wilde's metaphor, did run the other way. The flow of American intellectual and social culture into Canada was not problematic for American scholarship: it was fully justified by doctrines such as freedom of trade and freedom of information. It was radically problematic, however, for Canadian scholarship for it threatened the existence of Canadian culture. This threat did not interest Innis solely for reasons of personal interest and national pride. He was committed to the notion of pluralistic centers of scholarship as essential to cultural stability. Variations in history and geography demanded in scholarship concomitant variation in social theory and cultural meanings. Like Patrick Geddes, the Scot biologist whom he resembles and from whom he borrowed, he believed that the search for intellectual universals could proceed only through the analysis of radical particularities of history and geography. This relationship between imperial powers and client states, whether in the sphere of economics, politics, or communications, was expressed in his work by a series of polarities with which he and other Canadians have described political and cultural relations: relations between metropole and hinterland, center and margin, capital and periphery or in the more abstract terms he preferred, time and space.

For such reasons Innis tried to encourage a Canadian viewpoint on intellectual matters and to write out of Canadian experience. American social science cannot readily ingest scholarship written with that motive and against the backdrop of that experience. American social science rejects this transplant not solely because it is foreign; after all, Innis shared much in common with Veblen, an American outsider. It rejects Innis because the status of American social science was shifting in the very years Innis was writing, and as Innis explicitly recognized, from a prophetic to a priestly role: from an independent center of thought and influence to a thorough integration into the modern economy and state. The shift to an industrialized basis of production for knowledge signalled the ingestion of the intellectual class into the apparatus of decision and rule. Intellectuals became a priesthood upholding the pieties of industrial meanings rather than a prophetic cabal puncturing American interests and pretension.

On the one hand, Canadian scholarship cannot adopt the American

point of view without simultaneously acquiesing to American influence. On the other hand, it is only among the Left or among certain elements of what I call democratic communitarianism that Canadian scholarship of Innis' variety achieves a sympathetic reading.

But this rejection of Innis has had severe disadvantage for American scholarship. It has removed from the United States critical community the only writing on communications technology that has power, scope, theoretical integration and, unlike Marxism, relevance to the North American community.

In the balance of this essay I would like to pay homage to Innis' Canadian theory of communications not by piously repeating it, although I shall do some of that, but by gently extending it. I wish to draw out of his writings what I take to be some necessary implications of his thought. This requires some license that is more than poetic, some simplification of original texts, and some imputation to Innis of positions that are my own. I justify it only by my belief that Innis has had enough hagiography and the great need now is to extend, however tentatively, his analysis. Therefore I wish to extract two well-known polarities from his work and use them as a starting point for a series of observations. The polarities are time-binding versus space-binding communications and monopolistic versus pluralistic communications.

## II Time-Binding versus Space-binding Communication

There has been rather too much metaphysical debate spent figuring out what Innis meant by the terms time and space. I at least happen to think that the basic meaning of these terms and the implications he wished to draw from them are relatively direct and simple. He expressed the essence in a direct statement:

> In confining my comments to political organizations, I shall restrict my attention to two dimensions -- on the one hand the length of time over which the organization persists and on the other hand the territorial space brought within its control. It will be obvious in the case of the second consideration that organization will be dependent to an important extent on communications in a broad sense -- roads, vehicles of transmission, especially horses, postal organization and the like for carrying out orders. It will be less obvious that effective communications will be dependent on the diffusion of a knowledge of writing or in turn a knowledge of an alphabet through which orders may be disseminated among large numbers of subjects.

Societies exist in two dimensions: time and space, duration and extent, history and geography. Innis attempted to connect these polarities dialectically; he turned them into what we have learned to call, in testimony to our capacity to invent terminology, conjugant variables: the more you get of one, the less you get of the other. Attempts to

insure duration limit extent; attempts to increase geography attentuate history. He recognized there was always a price to social policy however complicated the modes of payment may be in the particular life of particular people. Wisdom in social policy is the continuous attempt to simultaneously adjust to the demands of time (stability, continuity, duration, succession) and the demands of space (geography, control, political, economic, military necessity). The ability to meet these conflicting demands is enormously complicated by the very nature of communication and communication technology. A particular complication is the inherent contradiction between the demands of long distance versus short distance communication. It can be put as a proposition: as long distance communication improves, short distance communication deteriorates. Time and space, then, are largely names for short distance and long distance communication. The dialectical relations between history and geography derive from the contradictory relations between these two forms of communication.

Now let me add a complication. Much of the confusion in Innis on the relations of time and space derives from his maddening habit of fusing together quite distinct dimensions of these two "variables." I want to argue that there is a physical, a structural and a cultural dimension to the relations of time and space or long distance and short distance communication, though the differences are one of shading and emphasis rather than sharp demarcation.

First, the physical dimension. When Innis suggests that time and space are reciprocally related, he first of all means that demands for the physical improvement of communication over distance are related to the progressive difficulty in maintaining effective communication in proximate relations.

A major dream of ancient man was to improve communication at a distance, to overcome the inherent spatial limitation of language. Oral speech cannot traverse distance without quickly evaporating into distortion, rumor and dialect. Consequently, there always has been strict limitation on the ability of speech to exercise effective control at a distance. A major challenge to human communities has been to discover ways to transmit messages in relatively costless ways over wider distances. As an economist, Innis emphasized not merely the discovery of means of transmitting messages but their transmission in cost effective ways. The specifics of how this has been done from smoke signals to television need not detain us. What we need to observe, however, is that the price of improving long distance communication is the development of types of codes and forms of social organization that alter the physical and social relations among people. Let us call this bias of social policy -- a bias emphasizing the increase of <u>speed</u> and the reduction of the <u>cost</u> of communication at a distance -- a high communication policy.

A high communication policy affects short distance communications in two ways. First, the extension of language over space drains it of its capacity to serve as an instrument for emotive meaning and emotional closeness and therefore reduces the capacity of language

to be time-binding. The cost of translating language into semaphore signals or telegraphic dots is to strip away from language the expressive capacity it possesses in close traditional contexts of face to face usage.[3] Second, the stretching of language over longer distances necessarily creates new relations of power and control that blunts the effective capacity of proximate relations. New communication facilities create special classes of readers, listeners, viewers, computer freaks with little prospect of communication among them.[4]

This can most easily be seen in the case of transportation. A high communications policy was followed in the United States throughout the 19th century. It began, officially at least, with the Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin's Report on Public Roads and Canals (1808) ironically enough during the administration of Jefferson. By directing social investment toward the construction of the canal, railroad and eventually the streetcar, both the effective size of the nation and of the city were increased. The radius of Boston, for example, increased through use of the railway from two miles to six miles between 1850 and 1890. This substitution of the horse-drawn streetcar and then the electric trolley for walking increased distance while it decreased freedom. Streetcars moved over iron and inflexible routes. While they increased the speed and distance over which people can travel and reduce cost, they necessarily change, as well, face to face contacts and social relations. They strengthen the relations between centers and margins while weakening everything in between. In prosaic terms, they strengthened the relation between the downtown department store and the suburb, the urban advertising based newspaper and the community. They weakened the neighborhood and village and the community network of knowledge, information and gossip. Similarly, the creation of the mail order house, through the telegraph, railway, rural free delivery and parcel post, increased the speed and distance of moving information and material while reducing the cost; it also led to the disappearance of forms of community relations organized around the post office and general store, forms which relied on traditional types of language and ritual, and substituted the more distant forms of the catalog and reproduced letter.[5]

In summary, then, as we have improved and reduced the cost of long distance communication and transportation, we have hooked people into longer and more reliable physical networks but we have also made face to face, neighborhood relations more difficult to maintain, inaccessible and, in the non-economic sense, more costly. As we have increased the freedom to travel and to be informed, we have decreased the freedom to move about under one's own power and therefore at one's own control and the freedom to speak to others of one's choosing with ease. A high communications policy, in strengthening long physical lines of transportation and communication, degraded many social relations and aspects of the cultural environment, reduced the choice of life styles, involved huge public expenditure, increased social control and led to purely technical processes dictating social relations.

There is a second level of contradiction in the relationship between long distance and short distance communication and this is less physical than structural: as communication improves over long distances there is an attendant shift of the location of authority to more distant, diffuse and abstract centers. This shift is recognized in phrases like the "rise of public opinion", the "growth of empire", the nationalization of power, and the emergence of legal, bureaucratic authority. It can also put this as a proposition: each improvement in long distance, space-binding communication leads to a dialectic of centralization and decentralization of authority and location. Or to put it more simply, though no less correctly, improvements in communication centralize authority as they decentralize location.

When long distance communication is relatively expensive, time consuming and intermittent, authority must be delegated from centers to margins. For example, Leonard White observes that:

> (In the Federalist period) the difficulties of communication were extreme in the conduct of the business of the Department of State...A reply to a foreign dispatch could hardly be expected within a period of three months. In such circumstances, instructions had to be general, confidence had to be complete, and the discretion of the minister had to be wide.[6]

The relative slowness of communication diluted the effective, detailed regulation of control over long distances. The slowness of communication between London and colonial governors gave the governors wide discretion in the exercise of powers.

As communication improves in fidelity, increases in speed and is reduced in cost, authority need no longer be delegated from centers to margins. It can be retained by the center, discretion can be reduced among distant factors, governors and operatives, and responsability at margins can be narrowed. Consequently, improvements in communication strengthen distant centers of authority and shift control to higher echelons of organization. To make the argument contemporary there is no better observer than Gilbert Burck:

> ...just as the cable and wireless once brought farflung and quasi-autonomous ambassadors and proconsuls under home-office control, so the computer is now radically altering the balance of advantage between centralization and decentralization. It organizes and processes information so swiftly that computerized information systems enable top management to know everything important that happens as soon as it happens in the largest and most dispersed organizations.

Burck concluded that computers and automation have "generated what appears to be nothing less than a pervasive recentralization".[7]

This relationship between the structure of authority and communication can be illustrated through some details of American history and of the

growth of modern nationalism. With the rise of printing and the vernacular modern nations grew through the centralization of power. Strong English rulers organized a central administration and used itinerant, literate judges to establish a "common law". Simultaneously parliament drew decisions to the physical and political center. The modern nation grew through the centripetal forces inherent in print and the vernacular.[8]

As the modern nation centralized its authority, it also decentralized, through empire, its location. Print in conjunction with new forms of transportation reduced signalling time: the time necessary to send reliable messages as a function of cost and distance. This allowed for the fixing of responsibility and accountability over vast distances. The period of North American colonization is an example. In North American problems quickly arose, for nations tended to quickly outrun the existing capacity of print and transportation. As Daniel Boorstin has argued:

> Communities in America had interests more unpredictable and more diverse than those of even the most remote English counties. Obviously, it was wise that their government should be coordinated with that of the rest of Britain, yet their remoteness and the irregularity of communication made central control difficult or impossible. Even the most prudent, flexible, far sighted British administrators could not adapt their programs to colonial conditions if they did not know these conditions or if their information, at best, was months out of date. Of the many circumstances which led to the diffusion of governmental powers and responsibilities into the different colonial centers, none was more important than the lack of communications.[9]

Communication improved after the middle of the 18th century, but by then it was too late. The weakness of long distance communication allowed a working federalism to spring up in the colonies. After independence the same barriers to long distance communication, barriers of time, geography, and cost, limited the power of nationalism both on the seaboard and more dramatically in the American West. Until the telegraph a structure of loyalties and authority developed that was to the community, the state or territory and to a working federalism and not to the nation, the United States.

The limitations of print have long since been removed. With instantaneous electronic communication, authority need not be delegated to colonial governors, regional offices, independent factors, sales agents or commanding generals. Power and authority can be maintained at the center. Distant military fronts can be run over the telephone, the diplomatic service can be effectively disbanded and diplomacy run directly from the home office by peripatetic foreign secretaries and telex, delegated authority removed from local government and recentralized. As the authority of long distance communication improves, the authority of the local community evaporates.

It was however the third dimension of time and space, the cultural dimension, that in some ways most interested Innis, and on which his own writing is most opaque. Changes in communication affect not only the physical relations among people and the centralization or decentralization of authority but also, and perhaps most importantly, the structure of consciousness, or to avoid that somewhat overworked word for the moment, the structures of thought. Here we encounter a complication that derives less from Innis than from a prejudice present in the way we are accustomed to think about thought. In our predominantly individualistic tradition we have normally characterized thought as being essentially private, a sequence of ghostly happenings in the head, graphically represented by Rodin's "The Thinker". However, there is little evidence to support such a private view of thought. Thought is predominantly public and social. It occurs on blackboards, in rituals and poetic readings. The capacity of private thought is a derived, secondary talent, one that appears biographically later in the person and historically later in the species. To reduce it to a catch phrase, we learn to count on our fingers before we learn to count in our heads. Fingers can be "things to think with", representations of numbers, but so can sounds in the air, lines on a paper or even, as the work of Lévi-Strauss has taught us, natural objects like animals and plants. These things of the world can become things of the head when they are disengaged from the natural backdrop and made to serve as vehicles for carrying a meaning. Thought is primarily public then because it depends upon a publicly available stock of what we have learned to call significant symbols. It is public in a second and stronger sense: thinking consists of building maps of environments. Thought involves constructing a model of an environment and then running the model faster than the environment to see if nature can be coerced to perform as the model does. Thought is the public construction and public utilization of maps, models, templates: football plays diagrammed on a blackboard, equations on a paper, ritual dances charting the nature of ancestors or streams of prose like this attempting, out in the bright lit world in which we all live, to model the effect of communication technology.[10]

It was then a final implication of Innis' thought, though not one he ever directly expressed, that culture should be seen not as learned behavior or mores and customs but as forms of thought: models constructed out of symbols -- danced as ritual, drawn as equations, incanted as prayers -- that serve to contain and guide human action. Culture is, in Ernst Cassirer's apt phrase, the place of the mind in nature and to study culture is to study the constructions men place upon their experience. The question for Innis then was how do changes in forms of communication change the constructions men place on experience, the nature of their thought, or to return to our more inclusive term the structure of consciousness?

Innis argued that changes in communications technology affected culture by altering the structure of interests (the things thought about), by changing the character of symbols (the things thought with) and by changing the nature of community (the arena in which thought developed).

By a space-binding culture he meant literally that: a culture whose predominant interest was in space -- land as real estate, voyage, discovery, movement, expansion, empire, control. In the realm of symbols he meant the growth of symbols and conceptions that supported these interests: the physics of space, the arts of navigation and civil engineering, the price system, the mathematics of tax collectors and bureaucracies, the entire realm of physical science and the system of affectless, rational symbols which facilitated those interests. In the realm of communities he meant communities of space: communities that were not in place but in space, mobile, connected over vast distances by appropriate symbols, forms and interests.

To space-binding cultures he opposed time-binding cultures: cultures with interests in time -- history, continuity, permanence, contraction; whose symbols were fiduciary -- oral, mythopoetic, religious, ritualistic, and whose communities were rooted in place -- intimate ties and a shared historical culture. The genius of social policy, he thought, was to serve both the demands of both time and space; to use one to prevent the excesses of the other: to use historicism to check the dreams of reason and to use reason to control the passions of memory. But these were reciprocally related tendencies. As cultures became more time-binding they became less space-binding and vice versa. The problem again was found in dominant media of communication. Space-binding media were light and portable and permitted extension in space; time-binding media were heavy and durable or like the oral tradition persistent and difficult to destroy.[11]

In propositional form, structures of consciousness parallel structures of communications.

Daniel Boorstin, in an apt phrase, recently described city newspapers, particularly those published during the period of urban expansion in the 19th century, as "the streetcars of the mind". The linkage of transportation and communication, albeit metaphorically, is appropriate; for as the streetcars stretched the city in space and broke the association between work and residence, the newspaper, particularly newspaper advertising, pulled the imagination "downtown" and in the process broke the linkage between residence and shopping. In creating communities on the move, on the move physically as well as imaginatively, the newspaper and the trolley car shattered the boundaries and reality of the neighborhood community and substituted for it abstract and mobile communities: communities of shoppers and commuters. Where people travel -- vicariously or physically -- influences the content of culture. Thus, space-binding forms of communication set up voyages -- physical, imaginative, metaphysical -- into new realms of space and possibility. Whatever else print or any other forms of communication might be used for, their primary effect is to redraw the geography of culture: to shatter the verbal resources of linguistic communication, mythic participation and shared ritual and to substitute rational legal forms of intellection and imaginative voyages in space. As we once defined Utopias as existing someplace else in time -- literally no place -- we came to define them as ex-

isting somewhere else is space and the vehicles of transcendence were those of communication and transportation. More prosaically, print burst the bounds of local interests and imagination and of the local community with its particular verbal resources in the name of a more global, spatially defined community.

But print also created new forms of cultural association. The form of cultural association related to time- and space-binding media is perhaps best expressed as the introduction of a horizontal dimension into modern states and into international relations as well and as an alteration in the meaning and relations of social classes. Charles Beard selected 1896 as the pivotal year in modern American history because the political conventions of that year introduced horizontal cleavages into society that were overlaid on existing vertical ones. Let me quote him directly:

> Deep underlying class feeling found its expression in the conventions of both parties and particularly that of the Democrats, and forced upon the attention of the country in a dramatic manner a conflict between great wealth and the lower middle and working classes which had hitherto been recognized only in obscure circles. The sectional or vertical cleavage in American politics was definitely cut by new lines running horizontally through society.[12]

It is not accidental that Beard chose the period in which a national communication system, through the agency of the news service and the national magazine as well as rural free delivery and the mail order house, was emerging to mark this new historical phase. He is implicitly contrasting horizontal forms of association with local and regional communities. These latter communities, naturally, possessed a class structure but such structures revealed class variations on a common culture: vertical divisions within communities and not horizontal units across them. Improvements in long distance communication created a series of national classes, first in business but eventually spreading out into every domain of human activity. These national, horizontal units of organization created by space-binding forms of communication possessed greater reality in terms of culture and power than the local units from which they sprang. The upshot of the Progressive Movement, of which Beard himself was a part, was not, in the phrase of John Dewey, the transformation of a great society into a great community, but the creation of innumerable horizontal communities tied together across space, attenuated in time, and existing relative to one another not as variants on an explicitly shared culture but, in David Riesman's apt term, as "veto groups". Moreover, there was little relation among these horizontal layers except the exercise of power and manipulation.

Beard states, then, the final relation Innis was setting forth between time and space and between long and short distance communication. If communication is physically effective over short distances and weak and attenuated over long, we would expect that the units of culture,

politics and the common concern that would emerge would be grounded in place, in region, in local communities. While these communities would be vertically stratified it would still be sensible to speak of a shared culture and politics among them. Small deviations in space would produce great differences in culture and interests. Larger units of social organization that emerged would not be national but federal: amalgamations of local structures into more comprehensive communities. However, as long distance communication improves, both local and federal relations evaporate into a stratified national community. Large numbers of people physically and culturally separated become effective national communities of culture and politics. As long distance communication improves and short distance deteriorates we would expect that human relationships would shift to a horizontal dimension: large numbers of people physically separated in space but tied to a common culture by participation in extra-local centers of culture, politics and power.[13]

In common observation we attest to this shift in many ways: in our recognition of the growth of "worlds" of fashion, sport, and leisure; the emergence of international classes of bankers, athletes, scholars divorced from the culture of local, regional, and, increasingly in this age of rapid international communication, national clients; the decline of regional and local university traditions and the growth of national and international schools. Paradoxically, again, as national and international improvements in communication occurred they reduced effective local and short run communication by making the relations between horizontal classes more problematic and generational relations more quixotic and unstable.[14]

In summary, as communication improves over long distance the effective units of culture and social organization undergo a change in scale. There is a progressive shift from local and regional units to national and international ones. This extends the horizontal divisions in social organization over wider geography and further attenuates vertical relations. Individuals are linked into larger units of social organization without the necessity of appealing to them through local and proximate structures. Communication within these local units becomes less critical for the operation of the society and less relevant to the solutions of personal problems and the maintenance of individual self-esteem. Finally, the growth of long distance communication not only alters the communities in which thought develops and occurs but the things thought about -- speed, space, movement, change, mobility — and the things thought with -- rational, mathematical, legal, analytic symbols.

It is this triple relationship between long distance and short distance communication that Innis collapsed into one relationship, namely, the relation of space and time.

III Monopolistic versus Pluralistic Communication

While traditional liberal values can be found sprinkled throughout

Innis' Canadian theory of communication, it is of some surprise that he saved some of his most savage language for assaults on the Anglo-American notion of freedom of the press. He argued that the first amendment to the United States constitution did not so much grant freedom of speech and press as it gave constitutional protection to technology and in this sense restricted rather than expanded freedom. The clause served largely to consolidate the position of the newspaper's monopoly of knowledge and eventually, through the paper's dependence on advertising and news, was instrumental in telescoping time into a one-day world, in spreading the values of commercialism and industrialism and furthering the spatial bias of print. In granting freedom of the press, the constitution sacrificed, despite the qualifying clause, the right of people to speak to one another and to inform themselves. For such rights the constitution substituted the more abstract right to be spoken to and to be informed by others, especially by specialist, professional classes. He refused to yield to the modern notion that the level of democratic process correlates with the amount of capital invested in communication, capital which can do our knowing for us, and fervently hoped that his work would break modern monopolies of knowledge in communication and restore faith in the political power of the foot and tongue.[15]

Innis' notion of a monopoly of knowledge is the one concept in his writings that has diffused widely and is now part of the analytic apparatus of many social theorists. And yet, like so many of his ideas, it is Janus headed, pointing simultaneously in so many different directions that it is hard to track them down and hold them together. He derived the notion of a monopoly of knowledge, on the one hand, from a straightforward application of the theory of economic monopoly to cultural affairs and, on the other, as is perhaps intuitively evident, from his analysis of the relations of space and time.

He argued that any form of communication possessed a bias; by its nature it was most adept at reducing signalling time and controlling space or strengthening collective memory and consciousness and controlling time. This bias hardened into a monopoly when groups came to control the form of communication and to identify their interests, priestly or political, with its capacity.

In economic terms monopoly simply means the control of supply by a single source. If knowledge is viewed as a commodity, as something that can be possessed and distributed, then it too can be monopolized: the sources of knowledge or skill or expertise can be reduced to one. Obviously, for monopolies of knowledge to grow, some division of labor must be present, for, as with other commodities, monopolies can grow only when persons are dependent upon an external source of supply. When people are capable, through control of knowledge and resources, of producing goods for themselves, monopolies are inhibited. In Innis' view, commercialism was a system that ultimately transferred all control from the person and community to the price system: where people are fed every product, including knowledge, by a machine which they merely tend.[16]

The strength of the oral tradition, in Innis' view, derived from the fact that it could not be easily monopolized. Speech is a natural capacity, and when knowledge grows out of the resources of speech and dialogue, it is not so much possessed as active in community life, a view Innis shared with John Dewey. But once advanced forms of communication are created -- writing, mathematics, printing, photography -- a more complicated division of labor is created and it becomes appropriate to speak of producers and consumers of knowledge. Through the division of labor and advanced communications technology, knowledge is removed from everyday contexts of banquet table and public square, workplace and courtyard, and is located in special institutions and classes. In extreme form we come to speak of a knowledge industry, and meanings are not dignified as knowledge until they are processed through that industry or certified by designated or self-designating occupations, classes, organizations, or even countries.

As in his analysis of space and time, Innis' writings about monopolies of knowledge continually moved across three dimensions of the phenomenon. There is a physical, structural and cultural aspect to a monopoly of knowledge, although again they are but slight variants on the same theme.

Physically a monopoly of knowledge is created when information can be made to move at unequal rates of speed so that what is the past for one party is still the future for another. This can be called the "bookies' dilemma". What bookies fear most is someone placing a bet after the race has been won and the winner declared. Bookies seek therefore to get information from the track faster than the bettors lest the bookies' future be the bettors' past. It was no accident that one of the first major uses of the telegraph for public communication was in gambling, nor was it accidental that Chicago became the center of gambling as it was the center of the railroad and telegraph. Mont Tennes, the Chicago gambling czar prior to World War I, established a chain of gambling parlors, organized telegraphic services to bring in race results from tracks throughout the country, and later organized a nationwide General News Service to bring more reliable information from the race track.[17]

The context of a physical monopoly of knowledge need not be limited to the exotic sphere of gambling. Whenever information, in fact or in belief, moves at unequal rates of speed, what is already the future for the privileged is still the past for the deprived. For example, there is the often told story of the Rothschilds cornering the market on the London stock exchange by the simple device of having a high speed private communication system relay messages across the English channel on the progress of the Battle of Waterloo. By knowing in advance news of military victory and defeat, Nathan Rothschild could anticipate the market.[18] But the capacity or presumption to knowledge of the future is a general phenomenon. It is found in shamans and witchdoctors, priesthoods predicting through elementary astronomy the floodtide of the Nile, or prophets hearing voices. Control of the speed of communication, in fact or fancy, is one of the principle points

of competition in communications.

Being strategically located in a high speed channel of communication delivers a great comparative advantage relative to others at some other point in the same channel or outside the channel altogether. Moreover, there is a cost element in this as well. The cost of communication is a large part of the cost of engaging in any activity. By being able to reduce the cost of communication greater flexibility of action can be gained.

Writing in 1932 Arthur W. Page felt that physical monopolies of communication were possible solely because of the dependency of writing, speech, and print on transportation for distribution. As an apologist for electronic communication, he felt the telegraph, radio and ultimately television would be democratic forms of communication because they would eliminate the result that the race goes to the swiftest.[19] Yet he also overlooked the degree to which many American businesses in the 19th century sprang out of telegraph offices (Richard B. Sears in North Redwood, Minnesota, is only the most vivid example) because of the critical location of the operator in a rapid system of information transmittal. Page also overlooks the critical comparative advantage available to those who can reduce the cost of telephone, either because they have free access to long lines (telephone company employees running side businesses, for example) or can through WATS lines reduce unit costs or who reside at modern points where information flows: airports and computer terminals, for example.

The structural dimension of the monopoly of knowledge is related to centralization and decentralization. The basic argument for the centralization of function and activity is the economics of scale. It is generally assumed that the cost of operation declines and the efficiency of operation increases as the scale of organization is enlarged. While it is recognized that there are diseconomies of scale that can be encountered at relatively low levels of organization and that any organization passes at some point into a phase of "diminishing returns", in the actual world these diseconomies never seem to be encountered. However, if the cost of communication is controlled, the size of organization has little to do with efficiency and cost effectiveness. The centralization of organization is justified more by inequalities of knowledge than by the advantage of cost and efficiency.

When lines of communication are long and slow, there is a dependence of the center of organization on its decentralized margins. Not only is activity decentralized but authority as well. Knowledge is possessed at the margin that is not available at the center. Therefore, as previously argued, freedom of judgment and action must be delegated to the margin. Information available at the center is not current, and the ability to respond quickly to shifting conditions and opportunities is absent. A general mutual dependence exists and on equality of knowledge as well. Perhaps the same things are not known at the center and margin, but things are known at each point denied to the other. For example, in the 19th-century system of distributing goods

in the United States, Eastern manufacturers depended on a system of distribution they could not readily control. While the distributors depended on the manufacturers for goods, manufacturers in turn depended on distributors for knowledge of markets, opportunities for products, and information about taste, styling, and packaging. This has sometimes been described as a gravity feed system of marketing because once a product was manufactured its subsequent fate was in the hands of distributors. From a cost and efficiency standpoint, there is not much wrong with such a system, but the knowledge possessed by the distributors effectively curtailed the power of the manufacturer. With improvements in communication, manufacturers were no longer obligated to delegate authority. The authority of the middleman was shattered, and he was degraded to the status of a hired hand following orders from the home office. Through high speed communication, someone in New York could know as much about the Midwest as someone on the scene. The systematic collection and storage of information in the home office reduced dependency on the field workers. As importantly, national advertising allowed the manufacturer to leapfrog over the distributor, create demand for a specific brand, and in effect suction goods through the distribution channel.

This homely example illustrates a number of points. In any system of communication there are critical positions at which information is stored. These structural positions are capable of monopolizing knowledge of given situations and power consequently accrues to them. One of the motives behind the search for ways for altering communication technology is the desire to break these monopoly positions. Physically the effect of improving communication is to maintain the decentralization of location and activity and to centralize the location of authority. Structurally the effect of improvements in communication is to decentralize work and to centralize knowledge. The centralized control of communication creates a condition of inequity and dependency.

Structural monopolies of knowledge refer then not to the movement of information but to its storage. The appropriate questions are these: is knowledge in any form of organization widely distributed or narrowly controlled? Is it centralized in home offices, secrecy files, libraries, computer facilities or limited to few, the terms of decision sequestered among elites or available to large numbers?

The effect of improvements in communication has been to enhance secrecy and mystification, to centralize and monopolize knowledge in national professions, data banks and home offices. But the effects are even more dramatic in the public media of communication.

Innis argued that the effect of modern advances in communication was to enlarge the range of reception while narrowing the points of distribution. Large numbers are spoken to but are precluded from vigorous and vital discussion. Indeed audiences are not even understood. Professional classes appropriate the right to provide official versions of human thought, to pronounce on the meanings present in the heads and lives of anonymous peoples. In Changing Concepts of Time he co-

mmented that vast "monopolies of communication occupying entrenched positions involved a continuous, systematic, ruthless destruction of elements of permanence essential to cultural activity". He is claiming something more than the now commonplace observation that over time the media of communication become increasingly centralized and conglomerate. He is not merely claiming that with the growth of the mass media and the professionalization of communication a few journalists, for example, achieve vast readership while other people are reduced to representation in the letters to the editor. He is claiming that the commodity called "information" and the commodity called "entertainment" and the knowledge necessary to produce these things of the world becomes increasingly centralized in certain elites and institutions. The civic landscape becomes increasingly divided into knowledgeable elites and ignorant masses. The very existence of a commodity such as "information" and an institution called "media" make each other necessary. More people spend more time dependent on the journalist, the publisher, and the program director. Every week they wait for Time.

The new media centralize and monopolize civic knowledge and as importantly the techniques of knowing. People become "consumers" of communication as they become consumers of everything else, and as consumers they stand dependent on centralized sources of supply.

The development then of monopolistic or, if that is too strong, oligopolistic structures of knowledge and knowing and the professional classes that control them expropriates the more widespread, decentralized body of human impulses, skills, and knowledge on which civil society depends. Given a network of such monopolies backed by corporate economic and political power we reach a stage under the impulse of advanced communication where there is simultaneously advancing knowledge and declining knowing. We keep waiting to be informed, to be educated, but lose the capacity to produce knowledge for ourselves in decentralized communities of understanding. All this apparatus generates continuous change and obsolescence: time is destroyed, the right to tradition is lost. The more complicated the tools of communication the easier for it to be anonymously owned and controlled and for knowledge to be centrally stored.

It has been the fervent hope of many that the advent of electronic communication and in particular computer technology and information utilities would end structural monopolies of knowledge. Ithiel de Sola Pool, for example, recently wrote:

> The information facilities provided by the computer can... serve as a decentralizing instrument. They can make available to all parts of an organization the kinds of immediate and complete information that is today available only at the center. The power of top leadership today is very largely the power of their information monopoly. Only they are served by the army of clerks that compile the records of what is going on. A society with computerized information facilities can

> make its choice between centralization and decentralization because it will have the mechanical capability of moving information either way. An information utility can make information available with unprecedented facility to people working at all levels.[20]

Similarly Edwin Parker holds out the same hope in education. He asks:

> What will happen when the student's access to information is just as good as his teacher's? What will happen where there are some bright youths who have access to this communication scheme — who look into the encyclopedia and into the communication system? I suspect that some of our youths will keep us older men running when their information sources are as good as ours.

While Pool and Parker see computer communications technology democratizing economic and educational life respectively, Harold Sackman sees the same technology democratizing our civic life:

> The way out of the dilemma of overconcentration of information power in some new elite is modification of existing democratic procedures with the aid of new technological capability. Pluralistic checks and balances between competing groups and interests, conducted in an open forum, is a time-honored method for preserving a dynamic democratic equilibrium. The design of pluralistic checks and balances for diverse real time information systems and public information services would be pouring new real time wine into old democratic bottles. The new real time information services can be applied to enable the public to exert closer scrutiny over elected officials by more frequent voting and more frequent expression of public opinion by electronic polling on key issues as they arise.[21]

Based on the work of Innis there is ample reason to suspect that computer communications facilities will not break the structural monopoly of knowledge of the professions and public media. But even if Pool and Parker and Sackman are right concerning the democratization of access to stored knowledge, they still are ignoring the cultural dimension of monopolies of knowledge and it was on this matter that Innis was most incisive.

When Innis spoke of monopolies of knowledge, his examples were often directed at problems that were physical and structural: speed of movement and access to stored information. But he also used the term in a stronger sense. He believed that the fundamental form of social power is the power to define what reality is. Monopolies of knowledge then in the cultural sense refer to the efforts of groups to determine the entire world view of a people: to produce, in other words, an official view of reality which can constrain and control human action.

Therefore, when Innis spoke of the monopoly of knowledge of the

medieval church, he was not simply talking of the capacity of the church to predict the future, through prophets and astrologers, or to store in monasteries the official knowledge of human experience. Rather he was referring to the power of the church to produce, through the control of speech and ritual and art, an entire system of thought, an official view of reality. The church produced what we would now call a paradigm: a view of the world that predetermined what it was that could be factual, that determined what the standards were for assessing the truth of any elucidation of facts, that defined what it was that could even be counted as knowledge. And it is the capacity to predetermine the facts that constitutes a cultural monopoly of knowledge.

Modern computer enthusiasts like Pool may be willing to share their data with anyone. What they are not willing to give up so readily is the entire technocratic world view that determines what it is that qualifies as a valuable fact. What they wish to monopolize is not the data but the approved, certified, authorized mode of thought, indeed the very definition of what it means to be reasonable.[22]

What Innis recognized, of course, is that knowledge is not simply information. Knowledge is not given in experience as data. There is no such thing as information about the world devoid of conceptual systems that create and define the world in the act of discovering it. And what he warned against was the monopoly of these conceptual systems or paradigms. Even in the realm of science he warned against them. He recognized that the intellectual life tended toward monopoly positions: schools would grow up around a Freud or Keynes or around a paradigm like behaviorism that effectively monopolized a department or university or culture and cut off communication. He recognized that organizing science paradigmatically heightened efficiency: the closure of perspective increased the speed of accumulation. But it also sapped the vitality of intellectual work, decreased its sense of time and history, and threatened in the long run the stability of scientific enterprise.

Cultural monopolies of knowledge then are found in the interrelationship between a form of communication and the world view articulated through it. Innis would conclude, I think, that modern information systems have not diminished the danger of this form of monopoly. Paradigms are present in the very structure of the technology of such systems: they are meta-informational, contained in computer programs, statistical routines, information storage and retrieval codes, technical theories that pre-define information and perhaps most importantly in systems of binary opposition which computer technology has made the lingua franca of modern science. Innis' greatest contribution to modern social science, I believe, was his recognition of monopolies of knowledge, his perception of the different levels at which they operate and his connection of them to forms of communication.

IV

Presenting the arguments of Harold Innis as a series of propositions

with examples can easily lead to a distortion of the intention of his work, a distortion I hope to guard against in this concluding section. It is all too easy to forget that Innis was a historian. The truths he was after were historical ones, not logical or propositional ones. The order of history he was seeking was the history of order, in Eric Vogelin's useful phrase, and not the order of logic. In his writing Innis linked together events in history, often events widely separated in space and time, and he rarely, if ever, presented straightforward narrative or summaries of logically implicated propositions. He did not present a deductive argument whose conclusions could be overlaid on all sorts of events thereby automatically yielding explanations. He presented no more than a series of tendencies he saw in history, a set of values with which to make judgments, and a set of concepts to provide a beginning for analysis. With his analysis you cannot predict what will happen when new forms of communication are innovated, how precisely they will bias space or time, or what monopolies of knowledge will be created. History was too open a system for that, too full of surprises, contradictions and antimonies. There are but few things that one can say prior to actually examining the historical record. Innis did assume that the growth of new forms of communication would produce profound disturbances in the order of knowledge and society. One cannot predict, given the abstract qualities of the technology, just what these disturbances will be. New forms of communication will lead to new patterns of association or community and such communities will create distinctive forms of knowledge and values. There is further a tendency for groups to impose their forms of knowledge and association on all of society creating rigid monopolies of knowing and feeling. Innis was here merely restating the Marxist proposition that the specific conditions the middle class required for its own salvation were transformed into the general conditions of salvation for all mankind, though he was generalizing its implication beyond the middle class. Each form of communication and monopoly attendant to it would bias social organization toward one of the two polarities of thought, feeling, and organization: time or space. Again, the precise form and type this bias takes is unpredictable; one need only think of his erratic and confusing remarks regarding radio. Finally, these conditions of control, bias and monopoly would encourage groups to search for new forms of communication -- technologies, types of speech and symbolism, forms of social relations -- in order to shatter the control and rigidity of social order. These groups would usually arise at the margins of organization where communication was weakest and least effective but there is no predicting the form or nature or composition of such groups. His propositions then are merely guides to historical research and not laws to be mechanically applied.

The same argument can be made concerning his values. The values you find in Innis are not unambiguous moral markers to be applied to life and scholarship. It was clear that he had a bias toward time but this did not prevent him from casting severe disapproval at the temporal monopoly of the medieval church. He realized that as the Roman Empire lost its spatial monopoly upon the barbarian invasions it was "natural" for the church to build up a monopoly over time: to rely upon parchment, a limited body of scriptural writing, elaborate ritual, monasticism

and celibacy, Gothic architecture and the supremacy of the Papacy to control an empire in space. Yet he was as caustic concerning this monopoly, as he was to be of the later monopoly of print. Similarly, he held a bias toward the oral tradition, but this was because he felt, like Graham Wallas, that the oral tradition had been almost completely driven out by mechanical mass communication -- the reading of books, newspapers and magazines, listening to radio, watching films. But he did not fail to note as well the binding, constraining power of custom in oral societies lacking a literate tradition.[23] Innis' strategy was always to oppose convention and conventional thinking, to attempt to restore balance to civilization by noting which elements necessary to a human culture were being eroded by a given technology.

He looked upon the university's contribution to culture as that of the permanent and loyal opposition -- always moving against the grain of society, maintaining values currently scorned, bringing balance and proportion into students' thought by emphasizing the unfashionable. He was particularly dour in his later years, for he saw the university abandon this role and saw no other institution arising to assume it. He characterized modern professors rather savagely "as hot gospellers of truth" producing "in the name of science new monopolies to exploit faith and credibility". The disciplines of the university were infected thoroughly by the bias of space. Economics, political science, urban planning, sociology and the physical sciences charted the problems, challenges, progress of society in space. Even time was converted to space as the social sciences, enamored by prediction, characterized the future as a frontier to be conquered. Even history had caught the bug for historical writing merely used time as a container to tell the narrative of progress: politics, power, empire and rule. The only exceptions were pre-history and the grand syntheses of people like Toynbee, who, forced to rely on sources other than the written work, discovered the more physical and durable human artifacts expressive of art, mythology, ritual and enduring temporal concerns like death. His own strategy was to break chronology and try to make time a variable in history: to chart man's changing conceptions of what time was under the influence of mathematics, calendars, astronomy, religion and ritual. He tried to cut against the concerns of historiography by restoring a concern with time to the center of scholarship and thought.

Precisely how he did this is beyond us here, but allow me in conclusion to shift his argument into a more natural, narrative mode and to make, as well, a note or two on his methods.

Innis' first major work was his doctoral dissertation, a history of the Canadian Pacific railroad. While studying the path of the railroad he discovered that it largely overlaid the routes of the old fur trade and this led him to an interest in the economic staples -- fish, furs, timber, pulp -- that had been the basis of the Canadian economy. The discovery of the path of the fur trade led him to examine the competition of New France and New England for control of the North American continent. Subsequently, in his greatest work, The Fur Trade in Canada,

he argued against looking at history in terms of the then prevailing paradigms: the formal stages of German history or the American "frontier hypothesis". He contended, in particular opposition to the "Turner school", that the settlement and development of Canada and the United States was largely an extension into the New World of the power and politics of Europe, particularly Spain, England and France. He described North America by three broad bands: the Canadian North, defined by the Laurentian shield and the routes of the fur trade connecting New France and Europe by the coin of commerce; the American South, tied by staples like tobacco and cotton to England; and between the two the mixed economy of the American North. The continent as a whole represented the adaptation of European culture to new geography. The patterns of trade, of institution, were not a pure response to indigenous factors but rather were controlled even into the 19th century by policies of London, Madrid, and Paris. Moreover, the factors central to North American development were not such ethereal matters as frontier individualism but the rather harder facts of the biology of beavers, the role of staples in international trade and community settlement, and the persistence of unused capacity over the trade routes which acted as constant stimulus to immigration. Innis also paid considerable attention to the differing social and economic motives of the imperial powers, motives which drove the French to the Rockies when the English were still at the Piedmont, and of the fatefulness of the contact between the tribal and oral cultures of the Indians with the literate culture of Europe, a contact which shattered Indian culture as they became dependent upon European goods and integrated into the European price system. The Fur Trade of Canada is less a portrait, then, of North American particularism than of Europeanization of North America as an outpost of the first modern empires.

From his studies of the fur trade came the germ of two ideas that were later to control his studies of communication and his analysis of the relations of space and time. The first idea can be put as a question: What facilitated the great migration of European power, people and culture beyond the perimeter of Europe into a "new world"? The second idea was an implication of the staple theory outlined in that book but developed later: communication, when considered in terms of the medium that facilitated it, might be seen as the basic staple in the growth of empire.

First, the question of European migration. The expansion of Europe into North America was based on a cluster of inventions in shipbuilding, navigation and warfare. These inventions affected individual nations quite differently. However, the central impulse in each country was improvements in communications: high speed sailing craft, reliable instruments of navigation and, most importantly, printing.

As the first uses of writing were in matters of empire, warfare and the state -- assessing and collecting taxes, keeping records, dispatching military couriers, counting slaves, the bookkeeping of live stock captured, casualties and confiscation -- so too the first uses of printing were in the administration of nation and empire. We have

come to think of writing and printing as elevated arts identified with holy books and literary art, but their immediate utilities were in the practical realm.

In the absence of printing, sporadic forays utilizing the new technology would have been attempted. However, printing encouraged the coordinated and systematic expansion of European empires, because of the structural relations between long distance and short distance communication. First, it encouraged the centralization of national authority through a uniform code of law, a standardized vernacular, a uniform educational system, and a centralized administration capable of integrating separate provinces, regions and principalities. Second, it permitted the decentralization of national administration through the portability and reproducibility of a lightweight yet durable form of communication. National companies of trade, exploration and settlement could be created such as the Hudson's Bay Company, the company of One Hundred Associates, the Jamestown Bay Company, that could be directed and, to a degree, monitored and controlled through the marriage of print and relatively rapid navigation. It was print and navigation that allowed European nations to burst the bonds of geography and spread into a "new world".

While print permitted this imperial expansion, even encouraged it, print, as the colonial powers soon discovered, also had its limitations. The French empire stretched from the maritimes to New Orleans, was thinly settled, and held together only by military strength. The weakness of communication in the American colonies permitted an effective federalism to develop despite British efforts to counter it. It was not until the 19th century with the decrease in time of Atlantic crossing and the growth of an effective mail service that control of the American colonies was possible from London, but by then history had turned a corner.

If Innis was led to study communication originally by the contact of the tribal and oral cultures of the Indians with literate European cultures and by the role of print in facilitating imperial expansion, he was led to move communication to the center of his studies when he expanded his analysis of Canadian staples into wood pulp and paper. Here he made a significant discovery, albeit not quite a serendipitous one, for it is foreshadowed clearly in his earlier work. With the rapid expansion of the American newspaper industry following the invention of the "penny press", American demand for Canadian pulp and paper was intensified. The rapid growth of the American economy pressed the United States into an increasingly worldwide search for raw materials. Canada by the conspiracy of geography and the history of European empire was cast as a staple economy providing such raw materials to England and the United States.[24] Consequently, many of the decisions central to Canadian development were made in London, New York and Washington, increasingly in this century in the United States. To support its imports, the United States exported capital, commodities and, increasingly, culture. In his studies of paper Innis discovered the true Canadian double bind. The United States imported

the raw material of printing from Canada under the doctrine of freedom of trade, a doctrine of Manchester economics which the United States selectively adapted to its interests. It then exported back into Canada the finished produce fashioned from Canadian raw materials: newspapers, books, magazines and above all advertising and defended its exports with the doctrine of freedom of information. Here was the Canadian dilemma: caught between the scissors of American demand for paper and American supplies of newspapers, magazines and books, its independent existence in North America was threatened.

It was this realization that turned Innis to the study of the relations of time and space, to the relationship between the routes of trade and routes of culture. He initially characterized the history of the modern West as the history of a bias of communication and a monopoly of knowledge founded on print. In one of his most quoted statements Innis characterized modern Western history as beginning with temporal organization and ending with spatial organization. It is the history of the evaporation of an oral and manuscript tradition and the concerns of community, morals and metaphysics and their replacement by print and electronics supporting a bias toward space: real estate, society, power, and practicality. But he did not leave the analysis here. In a manner mindful of his contemporary Patrick Geddes and the later work of Lewis Mumford, he extended it historically in both directions.

All too briefly, the final analysis takes this direction. There have been four major transformations of the scale of social organization in Western history. Each was founded upon a transformation in communication and later involved a transformation in politics and economy. The first was the unification of the Upper and Lower Nile into the first empire, a unification based primarily upon the invention of writing and mathematics, the availability of a cheap and light form of communication, papyrus, the civil engineering of the Nile, and rapid river transportation. The second was the creation of the Roman Empire again through papyrus and a simplified script, the civil engineering of roads and the diffusion of horse and chariot. Third, the creation of modern European empires based upon print, long range navigation, mining and later steam -- what Patrick Geddes called paleotechnic civilization. The fourth transformation, and the one to which Innis devoted the least attention, is the modern American and Russian empires founded upon neotechnics: electronics and electricity, petroleum and jet aircraft.

Each of these escalations in the level of social order was founded on a spatially biased form of communication, a form that satisfied the ancient dream to reduce the price and expand the effective range of messages. Each was motivated by the desire to bring more space and larger populations under centralized, bureaucratic, administrative control. Each involved a reduction in signalling time: the gap between the time a message is sent and received as a function of distance and fidelity. And each supported a monopoly of knowledge, grounded in the idea of space itself: that the goal of human endeavor was the

conquest and subordination of space.

The impact of forms of communication, then, resides in the forms of social order and organization they call forth and facilitate, the forms of consciousness they support and the points at which they locate forms of authority. If this is what the phrase means then, in fact, the medium is the message.

To the demands of space, the demands for long distance communication in support of empire, Innis opposed the demands of time, the demand for community, history, and stability. He in part inherited, I believe, this concern from the Chicago community in which he studies, the community of John Dewey, George Herbert Mead and Robert Park. But he did something different than they with the concern, for he emphatically did not believe that the growth of modern communications technology could support a "Great Community", as it was, following Graham Wallas, called. The extension of technology was extension in space. Empires were continually outrunning the capability of communication and so were forced to rely on force. They also were continually threatened internally by the demands of time. The invention of institutions such as the Sabbath and Synagogue, the maintenance of ethnic languages, the persistent reassertions of ethnic nationalism were devices through which the demands of time and the margins of civilization were pressed against the center. But each extension in space by disrupting, in the ways I have attempted to show, short distance communication, weakened the possibility of meeting the needs of time. Therefore, spatial empires forced persistent instability in political succession, armed insurrection, and radical generational discontinuities. He argued, in short, that some modes of communication support the needs of time or proximate, short distance communication. While he speaks of clay, stone, parchment and the oral tradition as time binding, the only effective exposition he presents is in the case of the latter. Like John Dewey he recognized that it is only through oral communication that the demands of time and democracy can be met. However, they too can eventuate in rigid monopolies, for in adapting to the demands of time they lose the capacity to control space. This imbalance in civilization caused by an over-emphasis on the temporal or spatial factor, on the contradictory demands of long- and short-run communication, was the dynamic Innis discovered in the rise and fall of empires. And his plea was consistent: civilizations maintain themselves by paying attention to the factors, the media, that allow for balance, equilibrium between the demands of time and those of space.

In contrast to almost all other writing about technology, Innis constantly emphasized the limitations of technology in solving human problems. He did not so much emphasize the capacity of technology to bring about useful change as the amount of cultural loss that was attendant upon technical innovation and the degree to which given technologies, when imposed throughout social organization, finally destroy the very ends they are trying to achieve.

This strength in Innis' work derives from his mastery of dialectics

and his unromantic location of North American history on the interfusions of technology, politics and economics -- on the political economy of communications. Dialectics informs Innis' work both as a method of analysis and as an implicit attitude toward the possibilities of scholarship and human action. Dialectics teaches first of all that the most important terms of discourse can be known only through their opposite: individualism through collectivism, negative freedom through positive freedom, equality through aristocracy, capitalism through feudalism, etc. Approaching events through contrary terms quickly leads one to recognize the contradictions and antimonies of existence and particularly how any system of thought or institutions harbors contradictions within it, possessing, therefore, the seeds of its own destruction. Innis always played off his principal terms against one another: time and space, Church and Empire, stability and change, written and oral traditions, Roman and Common Law, force and sanction.

The occurence of any idea or phenomenon always led him to ask: "Where is its negation?" When one term of a polar set is actual or realized, the other is always potential. The advantages of dialectics reside in its sensitivity to the contradictory tendencies within phenomena, the awareness it creates of the potentialities of any situation, and finally its necessary attention to the dynamics of social life and to qualitative changes in the nature of the social process.

Dialectics also involves an attitude toward events, and, as Andrew Hacker has noted, it is a tragic attitude. Dialectics, as method, was forged in Europe, where people have understood the harshest lessons of history. The European experience of the rise and fall of empires, of the disintegration of once flourishing societies, of disappointment in the grandest of dreams teaches something of the limitations of human actions and at the least cultivates an attitude of patience. American social thought, in contrast, is wedded to the doctrines of singular causation and the Enlightment view of history as a highway forever running in the same direction. In Innis one finds, in contrast, a scholar continually trying to search out the boundaries of the possible, the concrete possibilities of history and the limitations of human action. Moreover, by accepting the principle of contradiction, Innis tried to make it work for mankind by emphasizing balance, restraint and countervailing tendency. This attitude toward history and contemporary society serves as a protection against the wild oscillations between despair and euphoria, between self-righteous moralism and nihilism typical of so much scholarship.

Dialectics was for Innis both a method of analysis and a guide to social policy, the ideal combination of scholarship and politics. In both scholarship and politics Innis raged against monopolies of thought, wealth and power, and emphasized balance and countervailing force: time against space, duration against extent, morals against techniques. He recognized that any orientation, policy, social arrangement or system of thought had the defects of its virtues. Like Kenneth Burke he emphasized that ideas obey the Greek principle of entelechy; they perfect themselves and then they are most subversive. The only solution

to the problem of perfection was to balance ideas and orientations with countervailing forces for only thus could any stability, permanence and sanity be achieved in society.

Innis applied these methods and attitudes to the development of North America and to the historical role of media of communication. While recognizing the centrality of media of communication to social life, he avoided mythicizing these media and attaching them to edenic images currently so much in vogue. In the technology of print and later electronics he saw the potentiality for the perfection of a utilitarian attitude and the indefinite expansion of the administrative mentality and imperial politics. Print and electronics were biased toward supporting one type of civilization: a power house society dedicated to wealth, power and productivity, to technical perfectionism and ethical nihilism. No amount of rhetorical varnish would reverse this pattern; only the work of politics and the day by day attempt to maintain another and contradictory pattern of life, thought, and scholarship. As Innis pointed out, the demise of culture could be dispelled only by a deliberate cutting down of the influence of modern technics and cultivation of the realms of art, ethics, and politics. He identified the oral tradition with its emphasis on dialogue, dialectics, ethics, and metaphysics as the countervailing force to modern technics. But support of such traditions or media requires that elements of stability be maintained, that mobility be controlled, that communities of association and styles of life be freed from the blinding obsolescence of technical change. However, the demands of growth, empire and technology put an emphasis — in education, politics, and social life generally — on those media which fostered administrative efficiency such as print and electronics. Only by supporting the countervailing power of substantive rationality, democracy, time and ethics would the bias of technology be controlled.

The age of electronic communication has posed anew all the questions Innis raised. This is an age of satellites and cable television, video phones and computer information utilities, telex and pay television, and also multinational corporations and common markets. There have been a number of responses to these developments but none of them possesses the power and scope of Innis' Canadian theory of communications. The age of electrical machines has been savagely portrayed in dystopian tracts of the same kind that emerged at the onset of industrialization. Others have tried to analyze the new technology in terms of the qualitative differences between mechanics and electricity, between paleotechnic and neotechnic technology. Still others have pinned their analysis to the difference between communications organized on socialist as opposed to capitalist principles. Another solution to our dilemmas is offered by a cadre of technocrats, committed to no political theory, who energetically demonstrate how the new technology will solve every problem of politics, the economy, health, even loneliness and isolation. They propose to solve the "problem of communication" by identifying the entire human habitat with it. Finally, modern utopians have resurrected the original language of industrialism and presented a bright new world aborning by the automatic action of electrical machines. One finds

among them the pleasant notion that we are now outgrowing the nation state and that a new form of world order is emerging, a global village, a universal brotherhood or world government on a shrunken planet -- spaceship earth.

Most of this is pleasant if not dangerous nonsense. What we are witnessing is another increase in the scale of social organization based upon electronic communication. We are witnessing the imperial struggle of the early age of print all over again but now with communication systems that transmit messages at the extremes of the laws of physics. We are witnessing larger federations of power developing out of the nation state: the Soviet bloc, the Common Market, North America. Institutional structures are already being evolved in multinational corporations, regional federations and modern cartels. Multinationals could not exist without jet planes, advanced computers and electronic communication. Harold Geneen was appalled by the lack of central direction when he took control of ITT:

> When we started off we had 110,000 people in Europe. This is way back at the beginning. We didn't even have an office in Europe. We had one fellow, and he had about five assistants, and he used to travel around on airlines and hold meetings in hotel rooms, for 110,000. Today we have a coordinated management group in Brussels, which is our headquarters for Europe, which would comprise about 300 executives, and they monitor all of our operations in Europe.[25]

Such organizations are even creating, through electronics, a new culture. In the nomadic travels of ITT executives, the telephones become an obsession, as Anthony Sampson puts it,

> "not only because ITT makes them but because they abolish distance and provide a reassuring link with home base. The more uprooted the way of life, the more dependent the multinational managers become on their company, which forms the carapace within which they travel. I overheard one ITT manager in his Brussels hotel joking on the telephone for twenty minutes with New York . . . Inside these giant organisms differences of nationality seems often less important than differences of company."[26]

There is also a pattern of decentralization occuring. First, through satellite communication there is a thrusting out of cultures into new regions of space. This movement is part of a system of national and regional rivalries, which find expression in United Nations debates on international regulation of satellite broadcasting. If in a few years television images can be transmitted over national boundaries to home receivers, the United States and the Soviet Union as the two largest electronic powers can enlarge the region and particularity of their influence. Naturally, there are disagreements over international satellite regulations, but the direction of United States policy is clear and flourishes the same rhetorical strategies in use for over a century. At a recent United Nations debate, as reported in the New York Times, the United States representative argued that the United States, while amenable to international satellite regulation, opposed restrictions

on direct telecasting over national boundaries. He declared that the new technology could be used in an "effective and constructive way" without inhibiting what offers potentional for great contributions to education and communication. "In this world of rapidly increasing contacts and interaction among states, we need to understand more about each other rather than less". The United States representative objected to the concept of "prior consent" that the advocates of strict regulation were advocating. "Such a principle could rule out direct broadcasting for entire regions. Because a satellite beam would usually cover many states, one country's objection to international broadcasts could prohibit many others from receiving such broadcasts even if they specifically desired to receive them". Well, the French say it better but the more things change . . .

Beyond the use of satellites for direct, nation-to-person broadcasting, there is a second dimension to the current decentralization and extension in space of electronic communication. The second arena in which the United States and the Soviet Union are in competition is the arena of space itself. The exploration and utilization of space is in its infancy and one cannot predict what the ultimate uses of these lifeless colonies will be. However, the delay in space exploration did not derive from deficiencies of rocket thrust. The real delay was the development of a system of communication that would allow space travel to be controlled from earth. As printing went with sea-going navigation and the telegraph with the railway, electronic and computer-based communication goes with the space ship. In the absence of communication that matches the speed of light and exceeds the speed of the brain, some hardy pioneer might have tried to thrust himself off to the moon, although capital costs alone, as in the age of navigation, make that unlikely. The availability of electronic communication with its capacity to increase control by reducing signalling time has turned space into the next area of expansion. The meaning of electronic communication is not in the news that informs us or the entertainment that distracts us but in the new possibility to turn space into a domain of geographical and political competition for the most electronically advanced nations. All of space is now in the potential control of Houston.

These new institutions and ambitions are potential rather than actual. Perhaps what is most needed is a Bismarck to bring out of them a new order of politics and Walt Whitman to call them forth vividly in consciousness.

It was Whitman in 1870 when the railroad and telegraph were binding the American West to the East who said, "Long ere the second centennial arrives there will be some forty to fifty great states, among them Canada and Cuba...The Pacific will be ours and the Atlantic mainly ours. There will be daily electric communications with every part of the globe...The individuality of one nation must then, as always, lead the world. Can there be any doubt who the leader ought to be?"

It all sounds absurd, yet a recent and bestselling Canadian novel,

Richard Rohmer's Ultimatum, describes the invasion and occupation of Canada by the United States. Robin Mathews reviewing recent Canadian political novels in This Magazine testifies to what he calls a "very deep Canadian intuition", namely that the U.S. will not permit Canada self-determination. Canada will be an economic colony, open as an unhindered resource base and market, or we will face the U.S. Marines. But Canada, as Mathews knows, was invaded long ago and the Canadian imagination is already occupied by America. We need not here rehearse the evidence, it is too well known: the struggle over Time and Reader's Digest, the American television programs and movies, the ubiquitous motels and fast food franchises. Under the circumstances one can understand and appreciate the lures of nationalism, even if it too is one of the least attractive of modern doctrines. Innis flirted with it and felt its impulses deeply. He once wrote:

> Whatever hope of continued autonomy Canada may have in the future must depend on her success in withstanding American influence and in assisting the development of a third bloc designed to withstand the pressure of the United States and Russia. But there is little evidence that she is capable of these herculean efforts and much that she will continue to be regarded as an instrument of the United States.... Neither a nation, nor a commonwealth, nor a civilization can endure in which one half in slavery believes itself free because of a statement in the Bill of Rights and attempts to enslave the other half which is free. Freedom of the press under the Bill of Rights accentuated the printed tradition, destroyed freedom of speech and broke the relations with the oral tradition of Europe.

But Innis' response to this situation was to erect a history and theory of communications that while grounded in the particularities of Canadian experience could speak eloquently to others. That same task, call it as he did "A Plea for Time", awaits our renewed attention.

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2. The proceedings of the conference were edited by George Gerbner and others and published under the title Communications Technology and Social Policy: Understanding the "New" Cultural Revolution, New York: John Wiley, 1973

3. The argument runs fugitively throughout Innis' writings. Perhaps he said it most clearly in summarizing, with approval, some views of Graham Wallas:

> He assumed that creative thought was dependent on the oral tradition and that the conditions favorable to it were gradually disappearing with the increasing mechanization of knowledge. Reading is quicker than listening and concentrated individual thought than verbal exposition and counter-exposition of arguments. The printing press and radio address the world instead of the individual. The oral dialectic is overwhelmingly significant where the subject matter is human action and feeling and it is important in the discovery of new truth but of very little value in disseminating it. The oral discussion inherently involves personal contact and a consideration for the feeling of others, and it is in sharp contrast with the cruelty of mechanized communication...The quantitative pressure of modern knowledge has been responsible for the decay of oral dialectic and conversation. The passive reading of newspapers and newspaper placards and the small number of significant magazines and books point to the dominance of conversation by the newspaper and to the persuasive influence of discontinuity which is, of course, the characteristic of the newspaper as it is of the dictionary. Familiarity of association, which is essential to effective conversation, is present but is not accompanied by the stimulus which comes from contacts of one mind in free association with another mind following up trains of ideas". "A Critical Review", in The Bias of Communication, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951, pp. 191-192

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15. See "Industrialism and Cultural Values" and "Technology and Public Opinion in the United States" in The Bias of Communication, but the argument appears in almost all of Innis' later writings.

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# Moloch or Aquarius: Strategies for Evaluating Future Communications Needs

The planning of the communications future for a society may be the most important activity in the realization of that society's future. What follows assumes that this activity has never been properly carried out in the past. Planning is particularly important today, for now we have the opportunity for a real choice of particular futures. Our children's children will hold us answerable for our responsibility to do this. This paper develops a method of rating various communications systems in terms of their significance to society at large. The methodology is designed to guide the choice of topics for research as well as the choice of systems to be installed. The chief aim of these measurement systems is to put man in the center, and give him an increased opportunity to achieve a fulfilling and creative life, in harmony with his fellows.

Evaluation of future needs implies that the identification of these needs ought to precede significant appearance of the needs. Hence, the problem divides itself into two basic parts: identification of the need and evaluation of that need. In attempting to deal with a question as large as this, it is helpful to explore the problem as if it were some kind of space and seek to establish the dimensionality of the space as well as identifying the limiting constraints surrounding that space.

After many false starts at exploring this span of communications needs, an approach was developed which focused on three kinds of effects past communications revolutions had on their host societies. Such developments as writing, the phonetic alphabet, papyrus, trade routes and the perfection of the movable type printing press provide a rich collection of past revolutions. An examination of how they facilitated communication with the past, communication between individuals, and communication within and between large groups of individuals, disclosed three characterizations of communications revolutions. These can be thought of as dimensions of our search space, providing we recognize that as strict dimensions they are questionable, for they are neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily exhaustive, and besides, it is difficult to ordinate along these characterizations. However, even with these restrictions, the concepts developed here have proven useful and perhaps these shortcomings are significant only when the search space analogy is pushed too hard.

An analysis of how various revolutions facilitated communication with the past generated the idea that each succeeding communications made stored human experience easier to access. In addition, this ease was

manifested by a much increased use of stored human experience in the daily transactions of people. The way in which stored human experience was made easier to access and how more accessing occurred is illustrated in the following examples. Lets start with the adoption of the phonetic alphabet by the Greeks between the ninth and fifth centuries B.C. and how it affected this society. Writing had existed before the phonetic alphabet, but was very clumsy and only good for the making of lists, bookkeeping and the like. These early forms of writing required much effort to learn and maintain. The Greeks added vowels to the Phoenican consonants, and so completed the elements needed to produce a pronouncable writing form. This simple adaptation resulted in a skill that could be taught in just a few years, and was easy to maintain. So the number of users multiplied very rapidly.

The phonetic alphabet freed people from the limitations of the previous major memory technique, that of mime assisted memory, and for the first time encouraged rational consideration of alternatives rather than blind imitation of the response of a mythical hero to a similar situation. This is the basis for the pun in Joyce's Finnegans Wake, "ABCED minded".[1] The then new phonetic alphabet, which Athens finally made official in the fifth century B.C., produced many profound changes in Greek life, which are dealt with in detail by Havelock.[2]

The interchangeable typeset printing press, invented during a period of great civil strife in Europe, initiated a total intellectual, religious and artistic revolution. It took this technology a mere fifty years to eliminate scriptoria as the significant means of producing books. This printing press made cheap books, newspapers, journals and magazines possible, all further easing the access to stored human experience.

Even the telephone makes stored human experience easier to access. It is so easy to find out something through the use of the telephone that we frequently overlook its importance in this area. Much of the efficiency of today's world of commerce depends on this aspect of the telephone.

Surely the computer must be amongst the greatest developments in the area of easing the access to stored human experience. However, linguistic research has identified what may be a fundamental constraint limiting the utility of information retrieval systems, language translation systems and the like. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel presents the argument that really effective general purpose information systems are impossible to build, but yet we cannot afford to stop trying.[3]

It would seem that language is too complex to analyze in simplistic Aristotelian logic terms. We call this caution "Bar-Hillel's Conundrum". The difficulty of producing a significant easing of the access to stored human experience with computers must not be underrated, nor should the payoffs be overrated.

The really significant achievements in easing the access to stored

human experience have had the effect of modifying or changing the way people indexed information. The printing press, for example, caused references to change from the Biblical form of "it is written" to citing the exact volume in which the writing could be found. The computer introduced interlinked indexing systems, such as the "Key Word in Context" system. Consequently, a test for significance of this first characterization can be made by asking if a particular communications innovation has the potential of affecting how people index information.

So much for the first characterization. The second characterization stems from the interaction of the second partition, communication between individuals, with the list of effects of past communications revolutions. Man operates in many spaces beyond the mere physical one involving houses, offices, automobiles and just plain land. There is the concept of activity space, such as a person's job or role. There are also information spaces that people occupy and identify with.

Conversation represents a rather interesting manifestation of the spatial game. The acoustic-language space enveloping two conversants is occupied, at first glance, by one person, or the other, alternately; and a well understood game is played when one wishes to retire, or, the other wishes to advance into possession of that space. A common or mutually shared information space must exist for communication to occur. We must speak the same language, our use of special terms must stem from common experience, you must be where you can hear me, are all examples of this requirement. Furthermore, the efficiency, effectiveness, depth and involvement of the communication experience all seem to vary directly with the size of the common information space shared by the communicants.

To fully share a thing, both parties should have simultaneous access to it. In simple conversation, the acoustic space enveloping the communicants is fully shared. Both parties can both talk and listen simultaneously, should they so desire. The space is shared in a fully communal way. Simple models of communications have overlooked the importance of those brief periods during which both parties are talking. The shared space model suggests that this is where the significant emotional catharsis occurs. Many of our past designs of communications systems have inhibited simultaneous talking by both communicants. The echo suppressors used in long distance telephone, the hands free telephone, and the "push to talk" office intercom are examples of systems that inhibit simultaneous talking. A telephone subscriber once complained that when she called her sister long distance, she was unable to cry with her. The echo suppressors had prevented this shared experience from occurring. The time delays inserted by stationary communications satellites also affects the communicant's perception of the sharing, for the interruptions always appear to be somewhat late, and hence sluggish.

We communicate using many languages, speech languages, non-verbal languages, gestures, etc. The more of these we can share simultane-

ously in any communications situation, the richer the experience can be. Interruptions of one language can be achieved by means of another. A gesture can interrupt a speaker. The larger the size of the shared information space, the richer the choice of interrupt strategies becomes. The game becomes more involving, interactive and exciting.

The range of interrupt strategies open to the communicants provides a significance test for this characterization. To the extent that a particular innovation tends to increase this range, it has significance. It is not necessary that the communicants actually make use of the whole range of interrupt strategies, they need only be aware of the extent of that range. Conflict resolution studies have shown that the unsent message is of almost as much value as the sent message, so long as both parties know the channel is open.[4]

One can conceive of a computer based management system where each person's files would be kept in a central storage system. Browse routines would make it easy to peruse each other's work. Such a system is currently being developed at the Stanford Research Institute by Douglas Englebart.[5] Clearly such a system would enlarge the size of the information space shared by the members of such a group. Interrupts would be of the form "Say, I see you are thinking about widgets, did you know that Professor I.M. Wong in Saskatoon has done quite a lot with widgets?" Again, this system appears to extend the range of interrupt strategies open to the group members, by enlarging the size of the common information space shared by the members. However, such an enlargement is constrained by the Bar-Hillel conundrum, see above, being inherent in the problem of designing "adequate" browse routines. Hence improvements on the intellectual side of this particular characterization seem bounded.

Picturephone does not create a shared visual space, for I am looking at you while you are looking at me. A simple game of naughts and crosses can not be played with ease on such a system. Your naughts are on the screen in front of my face, while my crosses are on a sheet of paper on the table. For you, the opposite is true, and for neither of us is there a display showing both the naughts and the crosses. That display we must create by adding to the paper what we see on the screen. Hence, Picturephone represents a very mild increase over the telephone in terms of the size of the common information space shared by the communicants. The basis for that mild increase is the fact that the range of interrupt strategies does increase somewhat, for now gestures can be used on Picturephone for interrupts. However, the deletion of the handset, which is replaced by a switched audio channel permitting a hands-free style of operation represents a diminishment of the shared communication space, so the whole effect may be a communications tool that diminishes rather than enhances this characteristic of communications, compared to the familiar telephone. Picturephone's early designers did not consider this aspect in any important way.

The third characterization of communications revolutions relates to the ease with which new ideas can be propagated throughout the society.

Each significant communications revolution has increased the ease with which shared feelings could be discovered and developed in the host society. For want of a better descripter, I choose to call this process the development and discovery of nascent consensus. We are not concerned with beating the remaining twenty-five percent of the population into submission, but rather how the first ten percent got the thing going in the first place.

Money is one of the greatest social inventions in the consensus producing areas. In a very simple, direct and positive way it determines how many Mustangs will be built, how much bread will be baked and how many bridges will be built. Although the system is far from perfect, it's the best we have. Unfortunately, we have treated the system's messages as an end in themselves, and so few people can appreciate this fundamentally important role of money. In Stafford Beer's terms, our monetary system is a variety attenuator, and as the complexity of the social system it is controlling grows, it may attenuate too much variety and so fall short of providing an optimum overall situation. Essentially, if one does the right thing, one is rewarded by the society by receiving money so that performance that is acceptable to the society results in positive reinforcement that stimulates continued efforts. Unacceptable performance is rewarded by denial of reward. The rich pluralisms and freedom to annihilate oneself makes this system a very effective and stimulating one. Perhaps the role of government should be to assure that the system does in fact reward activities that contribute to social good, so that it is profitable for entrepreneurs to move in directions that are socially acceptable.

The choosing of popular songs is another example of a consensus forming system. This system is based on record sales and various other techniques that indicate the preferences of listeners to radio and TV. It is a complex, fast acting system. In pre-radio days, a hit song would last a year or two. After radio, the period of supremacy shortened to a mere month or two. Today, if that same period extends beyond a couple of weeks in a particular geographical area it is unusual. As our communications environment evolved from concert hall to radio, and on to television, the whole musical consensus system speeded up and became more pluralistic and complex. It also became easier to input the system with a new musical idea. It is a fine example of how consensus discovery and development is a function of the communications environment of a society.

In futures research work, one technique that is employed to explore experts' views of the future is known as the Delphi study. In this technique, the experts are polled as to when they consider certain events might happen. The results of this questioning are plotted to show the spread of opinion. These plots are then fed back to the experts along with a second round of questions, and the experts are requested to reconsider their estimates. Lo and behold, the second round results show less spread when analyzed. Consensus is generated! It is generated from condensed information and feedback.

In any consensus discovering system there appears to be both reduction or filtering of information and feedback. Variety attenuation and feedback, in Beer's terms. In the case of the Delphi study, the individual estimates belonging to each expert are all combined into one distribution curve, so there is data reduction, or variety attenuation. In the case of the popular song selection, the disc jockey doesn't know who bought which record, he only knows the overall statistics of record sales. Again there is data reduction or variety attenuation. In both cases there is also feedback. The attenuated data is fed back. The opinion of the expert on the second round of questions in the Delphi study is influenced by the summarization of the results of the first round. In the face of the data about the group's behaviour, will the expert hold his position, or will he yield? Lists of the "Top Fifty" are prominantly displayed where records are purchased, so that the reduced data from previous purchases is offered as a decision input to the prospective record purchaser.

The proper management of business is based on the same formula. The richness of the company's activities are reduced to a balance sheet. This is fed back to the manager to show how he did in the last period, and to assist him in developing strategies for the subsequent reporting period. Stafford Beer would suggest that this particular system attenuates much too much variety by absorbing too much information, and so produces a suboptimal overall system. He would probably be quite right. Not too much is known about consensus processes, but it would appear that as the data reduction becomes excessive, the control exerted by the feedback process moves from a dynamic, evolution oriented genre towards a conservative, small, no change one. Considerable research would have to be done before this could be anything but a mere hypothesis. However, even meaningful hypotheses are rare in this area.

A mass medium, such as the newspaper, the radio or TV, is a feedback system operating around the processes of a society. It picks up messages from the output of these social processes, selects and filters them through its editorial policy, and distributes them widely throughout the society. The health of the medium, or its income, is directly proportional to the popular acceptability of the messages it disseminates. Since more people will agree about what it is they dislike than will agree about what it is they like, a larger audience can be pleased more often by bad news than nice news. Trouble sells! Consensus is easier to generate in a negative direction with mass media than in a positive direction. New tentative ideas sound trivial on TV, while the ban the bomb, the stop ecological destruction messages sound important. Note how the conservative no change messages prosper in this system which has all the characteristics of too much information reduction. The variety attenuation is too great to permit the exciting new and untried to be prominantly discussed. They say it is not of sufficient general interest.

Skinner has observed that the significant characterization of evolution relates to increases of a being's, or culture's, sensitivity to the remote consequences of its actions.[6] Perhaps his observation

is less significant if we note that mass media that absorb too much information, and hence attenuate too much variety, have an inherent propensity to produce just this result. We must also observe that such media are easier to build, operate and control than others that might result in a richer and more exciting fare. Complaining about the editorial policies of mass media will not correct this situation, for the problem is inherent in the structure and size of the medium. As these media have developed, with their centralist structures, their content has evolved into forms that would be too costly for significant more pluralistic structures to bear.

It is too late to correct the situation by just adding many more TV channels, for example. Our trained response to the content which we now recognize as "good TV" is such that the probability that suitable content could be generated to fill these additional channels, content that would differ significantly from that that exists today is only minimal. The mere addition of channels does not increase the ease of creating high variety content. Such a strategy may prove counter productive, and only drive the cost of producing content up by increasing the demand for "good" content. Hence, the variety could be even further attenuated by this particular strategy.

The development of massive, consensus spawning communications systems that enhance the possibility of constructive and positive consensus seems both possible and difficult. We can do it where the messages are abstract, as in the popular music case for example. Where the messages are explicit, as in politics, we are quite unskilled. As system designers, we might be tempted to suggest that the power of the computer could solve the problem if only we had the hardware, but again Bar-Hillel's conundrum limits such strategies, making the software more critical than the mere hardware.

A measure of the significance of advances under this consensus characterization can be developed from the probability of a given individual either transmitting or receiving a message that is regarded as both interesting and unexpected. Jane Jacob's sidewalk is a medium of communication that permits interesting and unexpected messages to be exchanged at a low level of commitment.[7] Where are our "electronic sidewalks"? The old fashioned rural telephone party line was a form of electronic sidewalk. Tomorrow's electronic telephone exchanges may offer the opportunity of developing services that make a contribution in the easing of the discovery and development of nascent consensus, particularly if we understand more about the nature of such processes, and design into these new systems no characteristics that inhibit such services.

In summary, we have three criteria for evaluating future communication technologies and needs which have emerged from an analysis of the effects of communications revolutions on the societies in which these revolutions occured. The three criteria are:

* The ease with which stored human experience can be accessed,

* The size of the common information space shared by the communicants,

* The ease of discovery and development of nascent consensus.

And the three tests of significance which correspond to these characterizations are:

* Must affect the way people index information,

* Must increase the range of interrupt strategies open to the communicants for the interrupt act,

* Must increase the probability of transmitting or receiving interesting but unexpected messages.

Two general tests or constraints can be applied to any communications innovation or potential need description. The first stems from the observation that each of the three characterizations are limited in some way by Bar-Hillel's conundrum. Any potential need or innovation in the communications area must address the realities, the subtleties and the complexities of language. Because of the previous references to this factor, in the text above, we shall proceed to the second constraining factor.

The second constraint is economic, being more complex than just the simple notion that the innovation must pay off for the entrepreneur. The effect of any really significant communications revolution has been to open the otherwise closed economic system of the host society. The important communications innovations alter the environment in which the economic system is embedded, and open up whole new ways of creating wealth. The economic effects of such a happening are truly profound. Conventional economic analysis can only lead to an entirely inadequate assessment of these opportunities

The phonetic alphabet transformed economics from a household oriented activity, for the Greek word "ekos" means household, to a city state concern. The adoption of that particular technology so stimulated Athens as to trigger the hundred golden years. Had the Greeks managed to foresee their need to keep the communications environment of their society evolving, and developed paper and printing presses, they perhaps could have avoided the need for Alexander the Great and his militaristic methodology of consensus development. Perhaps almost two thousand years of costly social development with its attendant massive human suffering could have been compressed into a few centuries.

It would appear that significant improvements in the way in which human experience is accessed tend to result in great increases in pro-

ductivity. Eventually, however, these improvements seem to result in the society again being limited by the need for a further quantum improvement in this direction. Our own society today seems in need of just such an improvement.

Communications revolutions that affect the environment of the host society's economic system in this basic way seem to have the characteristic that they open opportunities for more people to do more things that have positive economic consequences. These revolutions provide new tools that can be used by the population to create wealth in new ways.

Ivan Illich uses the term "convivial tools" to describe tools and processes that have high utility for common folk.[8] In his terms, the cooking stove and the hammer are very convivial tools, for almost everyone can use them to advantage. The computer, as we now know it, is anything but a convivial tool. By making the art of reading and writing available to anyone who could spend three or so years learning the technique, the phonetic alphabet made reading and writing far more convivial than it was in its earlier forms when decades were required before a man could develop proficient skills. Illich argues the essential importance of convivial tools to the stability and success of a society.

The telephone is a highly convivial communications tool, for anyone can use it well. Television is less convivial, for although we all can view it, only a few are sufficiently skilled to be able to input the TV medium well enough to make the result worth significant viewing time. Newspapers and other one way mass media are similar in their level of conviviality. Such mass media must lie between the telephone and the post office at the high end of the conviviality scale, and the computer at the low end. The major communications revolutions impacted their host society's economic system by placing a new tool of increased conviviality in the society's hands, providing the opportunity for a new wealth creating process to emerge throughout that society. Creativity and exploration are terribly costly if the price is possible loss of material that has been previously accumulated through very hard work. Here then is the connection between easing the access to stored human experience and innovation.

Communications innovations that have this property of conviviality and are also consensus builders appear to directly impinge upon the processes that are basic to the wealth creating means of a society. An examination of the various communications innovations of the past show that these two properties do not always occur together. Television is certainly a consensus building medium, but it is not a highly convivial one. However, the subset of the consensus systems that build positive consensus, consensus that is forward directing rather than constraining, may well correlate with the set of communications innovations that are highly convivial. Such an important difference in characteristics between the two subsets of consensus producing systems, those that act as a positive feedback loop and tend to help the society

get on with its evolution, and those that seem to act like a negative feedback loop, and restrain such activity, suggest that they are really quite different, and perhaps the classification system could be altered to better bring this important difference into clearer focus.

In order to estimate the potential of a communications innovation to impact the economic system of its host society at a truly basic level, two approaches can be taken. Firstly, assuming that the conviviality and positive consensus characteristics of communications innovations describe the essence of the principal impact processes, a particular innovation's potential in the areas of conviviality and positive consensus could be used as an assessment device. However, this alone might be misleading due to the existence of other factors that are as yet unidentified. A second strategy may be more general, and is based on how the impacts of the innovation are likely to be viewed by the affected population. Four impact areas are considered: social good, economic opportunity, economic necessity and survival. The larger the fraction of the population that see the impacts as spreading across more than one of these categories, the greater the significance of the innovation will likely be. An analysis based on both these strategies provides the best known approach to estimating the eventual economic impact of a communications innovation on its host society. Whether or not the innovation will meet the smaller requirements of the innovator depends on his skill and staying power.

The three characterizations can, in a limited way, act as dimensions describing a communications needs space, while the two constraints, that derived from the structure of language, and the one relating to the eventual economic impacts of the innovation, define the outer edges of that space. Within this needs space it should be quite easy to locate regions of opportunity. Vast spaces seem to exist along the axis of consensus, particularly the positive or go ahead kind of consensus. The spaces out near the economic constraint represented by the convivial concept, seem quite empty and opportunity rich. With so much of the world's population awaiting the chance to enter our economic games, additional opportunities for expansion of that game would seem desirable, particularly if these opportunities are not ecologically pathological. The insights and challenges provided by this approach to identifying and evaluating future communications needs (and opportunities) should keep us profitably engaged for quite some time.

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# Canadian Media Regulation

Except in the field of broadcasting, regulation of Canadian media of communication has been limited to a general proscription in the criminal code against libel and obscenity, and a few belated attempts to protect Canadian publications against the diversion of advertising revenue to foreign periodicals. Again with the partial exception of broadcasting, the federal government has not assumed the responsibility of ensuring that Canadians are served by a variety of informational sources, diverse in viewpoint and capable of performing at a high standard. Under modern conditions, effective communication within an organized society is often deemed essential for its continued existence, functioning, and well-being. But as a recent report from a committee of the Canadian Senate comments:

> The big trouble with this assumption, the notion that media diversity equals a higher polity, is that it happens to be in flat defiance of economics. More voices may be healthier, but fewer voices are cheaper.[1]

Regulation is not to be confused with restriction; it need not be a totally negative concept, akin to censorship. Regulation can be a means of ordering priorities, of giving fairer access, and therefore of increasing choice, providing more diversity. As applied to communications, it can prevent facilities from serving the narrow needs of one class of owners or limited groups of users. It can help ensure that human beings who have choices to make of many kinds, including political choices, have access to the information which enables them to make decisions that are truly theirs. Furthermore, regulation of the media of communication can aid a society in realizing and perceiving its community of interests and its cultural heritage. If concentration of economic or political power prevent a full presentation of options, provide stereotyped representations of life rather than a more faithful reflection of human activity in all its diversity, or subordinate other interests to immediate commercial profit, the communications system will not advance man's true liberties.

The Canadian experience with regulation of the media, different in some respects from either British or American, is indicative of both the inherent problems and the possibilities. Traditionally, governments have been reluctant to embark on a course which would have them establish priorities in the older media of communication. For its part, the federal government can plausibly argue that it does not have primary jurisdiction over the media except for broadcasting (which the courts have interpreted as being an extension of telegraphy, and there-

fore interprovincial in scope). Otherwise, communications are regarded as local enterprises, whose property interests are under the jurisdiction of the provinces. The federal government has certain levers, however, that it can use in the national interest if it chooses. Under the criminal code (which in Canada is entirely federal), it can declare monopolistic practices to be an offence. It can control the importation of films and periodicals from other countries, or impose import duties on them. It can levy income taxes on individuals and corporations, and grant exemptions for certain kinds of income. Through its almost unrestricted power to spend, it can give financial support to communications enterprises. The last, however, is hardly a regulatory measure.

The fundamental reason for lack of government intervention with respect to most media is the tradition that Canada shares with many liberal democracies, that government control of speech or other expression is abhorrent. Beyond this, there is a more arguable assumption that channels of communication are best left in the hands of private owners, who compete in the market-place as do the producers of other goods and services. The ideological link with a capitalistic economic system is evident, that is to say, with the ethic of free private enterprise.

That these assumptions can be followed to the obliteration of any national control or self-determination in a medium of communication is illustrated in the case of theatrical films. By the nineteen-twenties, thirties and forties, Canada depended on the United States for nearly all its feature films, and even the cinemas in which they were shown were owned by a few American production groups. The Massey Commission reported in 1951:

> The cinema at present is not only the most potent but also the most alien of the influences shaping our Canadian life. Nearly all Canadians go to the movies; and most movies come from Hollywood...Hollywood refashions us in its own image.[2]

If through the play of economic forces Canadians had lost out in the production and distribution of films, they were active at least in film censorship, which was carried on under the aegis of nine provincial boards. The puritan tradition was strong among both Protestant and Roman Catholic elements of the population, both English and French-speaking. Films were perceived as having more to do with entertainment, clean or unsavory, than with freedom of communication. (In the past decade, of course, censorship has become much less rigorous.)

To the present day, Canada has never established quotas on foreign films, as have many other countries. Its principal efforts to breathe life into a Canadian film industry have been non-regulatory: the creation of the National Film Board in 1939 and the Canadian Film Development Corporation in 1968.

Broadcasting

In radio, and later in television, the federal authority found more

scope for regulatory activity than in films or the print media. Regulatory powers would be used sparingly, but some control at least had to be imposed in the allocation of frequencies. In the genesis of broadcasting in the 1920s the government tended to grant licenses freely to all comers (provided they were "British subjects"). There was little concern for the quality of station performance, except for restriction, negligently enforced, on direct advertising.

In 1932 regulatory activity was stepped up, and the laissez-faire policy which continued to characterize governmental relationships with all other communications media was abandoned. The circumstances that led to this departure in policy were several years in the making. In the neighbouring United States, the allocation of frequencies had been in a chaotic state, and Canada decided that action must be taken to safeguard positions on the spectrum for its own stations.

The commercial auspices of broadcasting had brought very uneven development of radio across the country: there was a lack of coverage in many rural areas, and especially in French-speaking Canada. Providing programs in French cost more money, and business in the main was in the hands of English-speaking owners and advertisers. Public dissatisfaction with coverage provided one stimulus for government action.

There was also a concern that radio as it had developed was excessively trivial and commercial. In some circles, there was a demand that its cultural and educational potential be better realized, with the BBC in Britain cited as an example of what could be done.

While it was said that Canadian stations offered insufficient variety, failed to serve important needs, and misused the medium, there was disturbing evidence that listeners were attracted in preponderant numbers to the powerful United States stations, and particularly to the programs of the newly established NBC and CBS networks. The time had come for the Canadian government to stake out its claim to influence Canadian broadcasting from coast to coast. It appointed a royal commission of inquiry to advise it on measures that should be taken to effect an improvement in the broadcasting service available to Canadians.

Evolution of a "mixed system" in Broadcasting

It is surprising that a commission headed by a prominent banker, Sir John Aird, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, recommended national ownership and control of all radio stations, more or less on the model of the BBC. The Conservative government which finally acted on the recommendations in 1932 was headed by R.B. Bennett, himself a corporation lawyer. The government bill, modifying the Aird Commission's recommendations, established a regulatory board, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. But unlike the Federal Radio Commission in the United States, the Canadian Radio Commission was to be in addition a programming body and an owner of stations. In fact the whole future

of private stations was left in doubt. The Broadcasting Act was written in such terms that the Commission could expropriate private stations, but to do so required the government's sanction as well as positive financial support that was never forthcoming. The Conservative government, after all, believed in the ethic of free enterprise, and it was unlikely to embark on a policy of complete public ownership unless driven to that recourse by the failures of private owners.

Thus began the rather curious mixed system of private ownership and public ownership in radio and television that has lasted until this day.

Built into the system was the quandary of how the stations, private and public, were to be regulated, and who was to choose between applicants for new stations or increases in kilowatt power. In both the Act of 1932 and its successor of 1936, the assumption was that the public body was called the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (the CBC). As in other Anglo-American democracies, there was apprehension over the prospect of a government playing a central role in communication activity, and a fear that the party holding office could use its governmental powers for its own purposes. The opposition parties and the voluntary organizations acting as pressure groups insisted on several measures to insulate the CBC from government direction. First, the revenues of the CBC were to be from licenses sold to listeners, and not from government grants. Second, although the government appointed the governing board, members of that board were to hold office for stated periods, and were to be accountable not to a single minister or the cabinet, but to Parliament as a whole. In respect to its broadcasting activities, the Board was conceived to be a "buffer" between the program directors and the political authorities.

The system worked reasonably well for about twenty years, increasing the amount of Canadian programming in English and French, providing national distribution for the more important and costly programs, and increasing the coverage of Canadian stations and the variety of program fare, some of it decidedly controversial. The system had, however, certain weaknesses and internal contradictions which kept alive the issue of how broadcasting might be better regulated. The private stations grew more prosperous, and less willing to remain a subsidiary part of the national system. As time went by, they successfully enlisted the aid of like-minded business organizations (such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce) and eventually of one of the two major parties -- the Progressive Conservatives, under the leadership of first George Drew and then John Diefenbaker. The growth of television after 1952, its popular appeal and its prospect for profits, made the stakes all the higher, and the private owners more determined that they should no longer be regulated by the CBC. Mr. Diefenbaker's defeat of the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent in 1957 presaged a fundamental change in the regulatory system.

What the private stations advocated was a regulatory board that was separate from programming, one that would function more or less along

the lines of the Federal Communications Commission in the United States -- a board that would have minimal powers to prescribe categories of programs or to determine what parts of the CBC service should be carried by private affiliates. Such a board, they argued, should deal in an even-handed fashion with the CBC and the private stations. If the CBC had been allowed to hook on to U.S. networks for the importation of American programs, each private station or private network should have the same right.

In the first five years of television development (that is, after 1952), the "mixed system" had effectively extended coverage to most of the Canadian population. Unlike the situation during the early days of radio, there was available a full complement of program services, in English and French, distributed through the national networks of the CBC and the private affiliates. The CBC used its regulatory authority to secure national distribution, but it was not very energetic in applying standards toward the station's own programming performance.

With an objective of using scarce resources to bring television coverage to the entire population, in small communities as well as large, the government had decided in 1951 that each city would provisionally have only one station.[3] The CBC would have its own stations in six principal cities (as production centres), and private stations would be licensed in all other communities. They would be expected to distribute a major part of the CBC program service.

As the time neared when second stations for the larger cities could be considered, the St. Laurent government appointed another royal commission (under the chairmanship of R.M. Fowler) to recommend on the advisability of licensing second stations, and also to review the regulatory system. The report of the Fowler Commission (1957) emphasized that the primacy of the CBC's national service should continue, but that a greater distinction should be recognized between the operating functions of the CBC and the regulatory powers of its appointed board, which should be renamed.

The Diefenbaker government did not follow the main recommendations of the Fowler Commission when it introduced new legislation in 1958, though it made a pretence of doing so. The result of its cabinet deliberations was a rather uneasy compromise between the former system and the Conservative party's preference for a regulatory board that would strip the CBC of its pre-eminent position. The 1958 Broadcasting Act indeed marks a turning point, away from the primacy of the public component in the system, and at the same time making the national service dependent on annual parliamentary appropriations and on advertising. Two new boards were established in place of one, each reporting to Parliament. The first, the Board of Broadcast Governors, was to be entirely regulatory. The second, the CBC Board of Directors, was to be responsible for a national program service in radio and television, and for the operation of CBC stations and networks. The CBC would have less financial independence than before in that it would have

no statutory assurance of income for a period of years, but must depend on funds voted each year by Parliament.

Aside from initial doubts as to whether the CBC would have freedom to continue its former programming policies, the chief problem in the next ten years was the uncertain relationship between the two public boards. The Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) had general regulatory powers over both CBC and private stations, but certain safeguards provided the CBC under the Act limited the BBG's authority in regulating network arrangements. A number of disputes arose between the two bodies, and the BBG was thought by some to be too protective of private stations and the new private national network it had encouraged.

After a further review of broadcasting in 1965 and 1966, the Liberal government of L.B. Pearson passed the Broadcasting Act of 1968. While emphasizing that private and public components together constituted a single broadcasting system, the Act continued the provisions of 1958 which had established the two boards. However, the new Act renamed the regulatory authority as the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC), and gave it undisputed regulatory powers over both the CBC and private stations. In addition, the definition of "broadcasting" was changed to give the CRTC authority over cable distribution of programs. Community Antenna Television systems had been developed rapidly in many locations to bring subscribers a better picture and additional program services from remote stations (particularly from the United States). This resulting fragmentation of viewing audiences threatened the basis of advertising support for many private stations, and the government responded by forcing cable operators into the "single broadcasting system", where they would be regulated in the same fashion as the more traditional broadcasters.

Throughout these successive changes was the underlying concept, held in common with the framers of the Radio Act of 1927 in the United States (such as Senator Dill) that broadcasting was a public trust, which required that a national agency administer and supervise the allocation and use of broadcast frequencies. In Canada it has been held that Parliament should set out general guidelines, but the function of interpreting and applying the statutory provisions should be delegated to an independent board or commission. The argument that station owners should have the same freedom of control enjoyed by owners of newspapers and magazines was never accepted. Unlike the United States, Canada does not have written constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech. In the main Canadians have only the protection of tradition and the common law. As a result the regulatory authorities have never been constrained from setting standards in the content of broadcasting on the grounds that such practice would violate constitutional freedoms; indeed there have often been public expectations that more program direction would be given broadcasters than the regulatory authority was willing to undertake. In positive terms, the regulatory authority since 1958 has been charged with ensuring that programming should be "varied and comprehensive", of high standard, and predominantly Canadian.[4]

Objects of Regulation in Canadian Broadcasting

The principal objectives of the regulatory authority since 1958 have been: that ownership and control of stations and networks should be Canadian; that the amount of foreign-originated programming should be limited; that the national service provided by the CBC should reach as much of the population as possible, either through CBC stations or private affiliates; that private owners preferably should be part of the community they serve, although there should be some limitations on monopoly ownership of diverse media in the same community, as well as limitations on the number of broadcasting licenses granted throughout the country to the same owners; that stations under license meet certain program standards (admittedly hard to define) in terms of community service, program variety, integrity of news presentation, and provisions for fairness in controversial broadcasting. Finally, as conditions permit, the regulatory authority is expected to encourage the extension of national radio and television services, in addition to those of the CBC, to as many communities as possible, in both English and French.

Before 1968, Parliament and the regulatory authority had allowed a number of stations to come under the ownership or control of companies from Great Britain or the United States (for example, Paramount Pictures and RKO - General Tire and Rubber). In cable television, by 1967 United States companies owned or controlled the services used by 77 per cent of all Canadian subscribers — approximately twenty of these systems were owned substantially by subsidiaries of CBS and of Gulf and Western Industries.[5] The 1968 Act allowed the CRTC to restrict such ownership to one-fifth of the voting shares of any broadcasting undertaking, including cable, and many stations and cable systems have had to be sold to new owners.

Both the BBG after 1958 and the CRTC after 1968 made regulations to limit the number of foreign programs carried by Canadian television stations. In the period before 1958, the CBC's position as the sole operator of national networks was assumed to guarantee the availability of Canadian programming. After 1958, private stations outnumbered CBC stations, and the licensing of a private (second) television network increased the opportunities for the importation of foreign programs, chiefly from U.S. networks and American film sources. To meet the objective laid down in the act that programs should be predominantly Canadian, the BBG made the requirement that at least 55 per cent of any television station's programs should be Canadian in origin, but the requirement was interpreted so loosely that most private stations fell considerably short of this objective, especially in prime time. Indeed after 1958, despite the creation of the second Canadian network (CTV), there was a higher percentage of American programs available in two-station cities than there had been when the CBC was the single source of Canadian network programs.[6]

After 1968, the CRTC tightened the "Canadian content" regulations for television, and for the first time established a minimum requirement in radio. Thirty percent of the recorded music broadcast

AM radio stations must have a Canadian component in composition or performance. This new regulation has had a pronounced effect on the composition, performance and recording of popular music, and since 1970 a promising record industry has developed where (at least in English Canada) there had been virtually none.

After ensuring Canadian ownership of stations and a quota for Canadian content in programming, the CRTC has a third objective to see that as many Canadians as possible have access to the national program service of the CBC. A number of private stations have received their licenses on condition that they be affiliated with a CBC network. The CRTC has pressed the CBC to extend service to thinly populated areas, and has facilitated the establishment of CBC stations in some centres where private stations previously had the field to themselves. (The BBG on occasion had favored private applicants or delayed in approving applications from the CBC -- notably in Quebec City and St. John's, Newfoundland.) Furthering Canada's official bilingual policy, the CRTC has been especially concerned to provide programming in French to Canadians who speak or understand that language. Outside the French-Canadian "heartland" of Quebec, this has usually required the CBC to establish French-language stations, because such services are seldom commercially profitable. Moreover, the CRTC is known to have spurred a government announcement early in 1972 that the CBC would be authorized to extend its services within a five-year period to 98 per cent of Canada's entire population.[7]

In its attempts to curb monopolies or to prevent domination of broadcasting by large-scale enterprise, the CRTC has had objectives similar to those espoused by the FCC in the United States. A multiplicity of owners is supposed to promote diversity and to help serve the needs of particular communities and regions -- possibly also to help the media "act as a check upon other institutional power centres" (in the words of Nicholas Johnson of the FCC). The CRTC not only grants licenses, but it has the power to review changes of ownership and transfers of shares in companies holding licenses. Nevertheless, the trend toward fewer and bigger owners is the same in Canada as in the United States. There are several large multi-media groups. For example, in 1970 the Southam chain of newspapers (accounting for 18 per cent of Canada's daily newspaper circulation) through its own holdings and those of an associated company, Selkirk Holdings, held substantial interests in two weeklies, three weekend magazines, 34 business publications, 21 radio and television stations, and seven cable systems.[8] Canada's largest magazine publisher, Maclean-Hunter, had majority interests in six radio stations, one television station, and sixteen cable systems.[9] Each of these companies has on occasion been denied broadcasting applications because of "excessive concentration of ownership" in a community or because of "no community involvement". But the precise guidelines employed by the CRTC have not been made public, and they seem too permissive to avoid undue media concentration.

In its objective of improving program quality and limiting the effects of commercialism, the CRTC has not been notably more successful than

its predecessors or indeed than regulatory agencies in other countries. Public statements of admonition have been plentiful, and a very few applications for the reissuing of licenses have been denied, but in the main broadcasters, both public and private, have continued as before. The CRTC has sought to increase the variety of program services available to radio listeners by requiring that more attention be paid to the tastes of minority groups, especially be FM stations.

Although the numbers of radio and television stations have increased rapidly in the past twenty years, on the whole the regulatory agencies have never been confident that more outlets ensure more program choice. The CBC was rather restrictive so long as it was the body making recommendations to the licensing authority, the BBG less so. But in every case the economic position of existing stations has tended to be protected.

The most acute of the unsolved problems no doubt relates to cable broadcasting. Because of a continuing appetite for American entertainment, cable systems have grown very rapidly in Canada, to the point where an estimated 38 per cent of television households are now (January, 1975) served by cable. The efforts to bring in remote U.S. stations called for a CRTC response in maintaining the Canadian character of television services. It has required cable systems to carry Canadian television programs as a matter of priority and to provide one channel for community use -- this even if the number of channels is insufficient to bring in all available stations from the United States. And, as pointed out, the fragmenting of television audiences through additional cable services poses a real threat to the existing television stations, since advertising costs per thousand viewing households will inevitably be higher. Thus the CRTC has been forced to consider ways of protecting the commercial interests of licensed TV broadcasters. This has brought further regulations affecting the cable operators.

It must be recognized that one of the principal objectives of the broadcasting system in Canada, and hence of its regulatory agency, is the maintenance and promotion of a Canadian national identity. There is no doubt a similar objective in most countries, but it seldom has to be articulated precisely because of natural defences provided by geography, language differences, or the power of the economy. In Canada these "natural" defences have been lacking, and the American presence is always felt. It is true that French-speaking Canadians have a form of defence in their language, but less so in an industrialized and urbanized society, where the main economic levers are in the hands of the English-speaking and predominantly foreign owners. The feeling that the culture of the Québecois is threatened has much to do with the existence of a separatist movement, and is reflected in a resumption of an old contest between the provincial and federal governments over the control of broadcasting. The ambiguities surrounding the status of wired systems provide the occasion for the provincial challenge.

Under the Broadcasting Act of 1968, licensees are enjoined to "safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada". The CBC's service is expected to "contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity". It is probably beyond the powers of any single communications medium, or of the CRTC as a regulatory body, to establish a sense of Canadian nationhood or of unity if many other forces work in an opposite direction. But a policy statement of the Pearson government declared that the mandate to provide Canadian broadcasting:

> ...did not arise from any narrow nationalism that sought to shut out the rest of the world or, more appropriately, the rest of the continent, but rather from a clear conviction that the destiny of Canada depended on our ability and willingness to control and utilize our own internal communications for Canadian purposes.[10]

More recently, the government has been concerned about the future of all telecommunications -- not only broadcasting, but transmission by other means, such as cable, satellite and computer technology. The Minister of Communications has put forward a proposal to merge the functions now performed by the CRTC and the telecommunications section of the Canadian Transport Commission into a single federal agency, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.[11] On the telecommunications side, the enlarge agency would regulate the rates and approve the tariffs and contracts of the federally incorporated telephone and telegraph companies in Canada. Although changes in technology require modifications in the existing regulatory patterns, there are difficulties in the government's proposal that should be debated. One of the reasons that the CRTC has been a more effective regulatory agency than the FCC, for example, may be that its responsibilities are of a more manageable size. A super-agency of the kind envisaged may be too busy, too remote, too concerned with technical and economic questions relating to communications hardware for average viewers and listeners to relate to. The Canadian Transport Commission, which now regulates telecommunications carriers, has not seemed as accessible to ordinary consumers as has been the CRTC, which is less of a specialist board and seemingly more representative of the public. Programming is of a different order of importance in broadcasting than in other telecommunications systems, and a regulatory board that can make this one of its principal concerns may be essential for Canadian purposes.[12]

Newspapers and Magazines

Until the late 1950s, little public attention was paid to the problems of the newspaper and periodical press, or to the service they were rendering. It was generally assumed that periodicals should have freedom from government supervision or restriction, except for the laws governing libel and obscenity. It was true that Canadian publications enjoyed the benefits of a cheap postal rate, but such benefits were common in other countries as well. Daily newspapers, with a complement

of local news and advertising, seemed on the face of it to be indisputably Canadian, although the news columns relied on foreign wire and syndicated services for most of their international coverage and for many of their features. In the dailies of the smaller cities, it was said, over half the news coverage characteristically was written outside Canada.[13]

No special provisions appeared necessary to safeguard Canadian ownership. Although the number of cities with two or more dailies declined rapidly, those newspapers that survived tended to be profitable. For those owners wishing to sell, the development of newspaper chains provided some assurance of a buyer if the newspaper in question was economically viable. The concentration of ownership that resulted, the difficulty in starting a new publication that could compete, and the dependence of most cities on one newspaper were all causes for concern, but nothin was done to face this situation until an inquiry was authorized by the Senate in 1969.

The few steps that had been taken some years earlier resulted rather from concern over foreign competition and foreign ownership, more particularly in the magazine field. Canadian magazines had always to contend with American competitors, and in the 1920s the publishers lobbied the government for protection.[14] In 1931 a duty was imposed on foreign magazines that had at least 20 per cent advertising content, but the tax was removed in 1936. By 1949 Canadian magazines were being outsold in their own markets by more than two to one. From then on, the situation grew steadily more serious. Two American giants — Time and Reader's Digest — established branch operations in Montreal to distribute Canadian editions and to share in Canadian advertising revenues. As a rival editor bitterly commented in 1962:

> Time and Reader's Digest...dump their editorial material into Canada and then solicit advertising to keep the news pages apart. Since their editorial costs have already been paid in the United States, they can run a highly efficient and well staffed advertising department, and can offer combination deals to big international advertisers.[15]

Under the heavy competition not only of U.S. publications but of television, the number of Canadian magazines dwindled. A royal commission on publications (the O'Leary Commission) was appointed in 1960 to investigate; it reported that Time and Reader's Digest were receiving over 40 per cent of the total magazine advertising revenues. Canadians, said the O'Leary Report, were:

> exposed unceasingly to a vast network of communications which reaches to every corner of our land; American words, images and print — the good, the bad, and the indifferent — batter unrelentingly...at our eyes and ears.[16]

By 1964 the problem of the survival of Canadian magazines was still unsolved. In that year, the government introduced legislation to prevent

advertisers from deducting, for income tax purposes, the cost of advertising placed in a foreign periodical aimed at the Canadian market, or in the Canadian editions of foreign periodicals. Time and Reader's Digest mounted an effective lobby to forestall the application of this legislation to them, and did so with the backing of the U.S. State Department.[17] As enacted, the new amendment to the Income Tax Act had the effect of granting an exemption to these two U.S. magazines: for the purposes of the Act, they were figuratively given Canadian citizenship. Between 1959 and 1969, the sale of Canadian magazines decreased from 45 million to 34 million copies. The circulation of Time during the same period doubled, and its advertising revenue nearly tripled. Reader's Digest, published in English and French, has become the magazine with the largest Canadian circulation.[18] Only one large Canadian publisher of general-interest or consumer magazines survives, the firm of Maclean-Hunter.

The position that one Canadian publisher, Maclean-Hunter, has achieved in the magazine field is symptomatic of what has been happening, to a lesser degree, in the other media. The CRTC has been more vigorous than its predecessors in limiting the common ownership of radio, television and newspapers in the same community, but in spite of its efforts, more and more broadcasting stations are being acquired by concentrations of media ownership. The tendency toward monopoly was the focus of the most recent inquiry into the mass media, initiated in the Canadian Senate. Its special committee, headed by Senator Keith Davey, reported in 1970:

> Within...103 communities there are 485 "units of mass communication" -- daily newspapers or radio or TV stations -- and slightly over half of them are controlled or partially owned by groups. Of Canada's 116 daily newspapers, 77 (or 66.4 per cent) are controlled or partially owned by groups. Of the 97 TV stations (including some relay stations), 47 (or 48.5 per cent) are controlled by groups. Of 272 radio stations, groups control or own a substantial interest in 129 (or 47.4 per cent).[19]

The Senate committee worried about the consequences of this accelerating trend and recommended government action to forestall it. There is as yet no evidence that the government will act. The committee advocated the creation of an official Press Ownership Review Board with powers to approve or disapprove mergers or takeovers of publications. It asked that the CRTC be given more precise guidelines for curbing the over-concentration of media ownership. It suggested removing the income tax exemptions that have benefited Time and Reader's Digest:

> Somehow or other, we've arrived in the peculiarly Canadian position where our most successful magazines are American magazines, and we're moving inexorably toward the day when they'll be the only magazines we have. This may make sense in terms of economics; on every other basis it's intolerable.[20]

The contrasting values of decisions made through the economics of the market-place, and of decisions based on other social criteria -- these are the contrasts that help explain the incongruities and paradoxes existing within the Canadian systems of communication. The fear of "Americanization" is perhaps only one manifestation of the dilemma that exists in Canada as in many liberal democracies. In the name of freedom, are the means of communication to be operated by private owners with minimal intervention from public authorities? Or in the name of social responsibility, are controls to be placed on these keepers of the gates to promote or preserve some presumed individual or collective good? Or should the state, as a legitimate representative of the public interest, assume through its agencies a positive communications role? In turn, Canada has answered yes to all of these questions, and no one would pretend that satisfactory answers to Canadian needs have been found. The search for a balance between national interests and broad cultural needs goes on.

In a number of areas, Canada has shown an inclination to use the power of the state to regulate the economy or to provide social benefits. Canadians generally possess what Robert Presthus describes as a "positive appreciation of government's role". He points out that by 1972, all levels of government spent about 38 per cent of the gross national product, a percentage "well above the United States and among the highest in western nations".[21] Even so, Canadian governments have often drawn back from some contemplated action rather than offend the interests of strategically placed or privileged groups. Canada is still a liberal rather than a social democratic country. Its media of communication will continue to operate in this context, though it may be significant that advocacy of stronger state action has come most recently from a Senate committee composed entirely of members who belong to centre parties, normally identified with free enterprise and supported by private business. It can be expected that the media will continue to be operated in the main by private owners, with government intervening periodically in response to particular pressures, especially those generated by national feelings, whether expressed in English or French. For those who wish to avoid a continental uniformity, the struggle has just begun.

The history of regulation focuses attention on the choices involved: to what uses are the media to be put? what interests are they to serve? what needs? The Canadian experience demonstrates at least some limitations of regulation but also the increasing demands that must now be made of regulators.

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5. Instant World: A Report on Telecommunications in Canada (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1971), p. 74; CRTC Annual Report, 1970-71 (Ottawa, 1971), pp. 25 and 30

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8. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, Vol. II, pp. 100-106

9. Ibid., pp. 90-94

10. Canada, Secretary of State, White Paper on Broadcasting, 1966 (Ottawa, 1966), p. 5

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13. Arnold Edinborough in Mass Media in Canada, John A. Irving, ed. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), p. 27

14. Isaiah Litvak and Christopher Maule, Cultural Sovereignty: The Time and Reader's Digest Case in Canada (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 18-28

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16. Canada, Royal Commission on Publications, Report (Ottawa, 1961), pp. 5-6

17. Walter Gordon, then Minister of Finance, has described this in public speeches and in his book, A Choice for Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966), pp. 96-7

18. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, Vol. I, pp. 156-58

19. Ibid., p. 5

20. Ibid., p. 256

21. Robert Presthus, Elite Accommodation in Canadian Politics (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1973), p. 24. A comparison of government expenditures in Canada and the United States appears in Economic Council of Canada, Eighth Annual Review (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1971), pp. 5-15

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# Culture and Entropy: A Lay View of Broadcasting *

It is the purpose of this paper first to reiterate and to emphasize the significance of information and communication in society. Second, it is its purpose to suggest that broadcasting in Canada and especially the relationship between programming and finance is wrong and requires reform. This relationship, both public and private, on the premise that the structure, as it has developed, has become less than effective in serving the national strategy and policy laid down by successive Parliaments of Canada and that the objectives of Parliament have been and are being subverted.

In sum, the very logic of the financing and structure of Canadian broadcasting to the Canadian home is wrong and renders difficult, inadequate and often impossible the right use of Canadian financial resources and Canadian production talent. Further, it is feared that regulation by a regulatory authority is unlikely sufficiently to influence programming on Canadian stations and lead them to fulfil the purposes set out in the present or earlier Acts of the Parliament of Canada. The expansion of cable systems and the danger to broadcasting stations reinforce these doubts.

The situation has been long, grievously long in maturing. It has been allowed too carelessly to develop because of the conflict of interest between the broadcasting purposes of Parliament, and the financial requirements of broadcasting. The present position has arisen from the inherent conflict of interest between the private and public sectors, and from the long process of weakening, limiting and eroding -- particularly since the introduction of television and cable -- the once clearly defined and successful, as well as profitable, operation of a once-strong single Canadian broadcasting service and system.

There has been and continues to be too much deviation from basic principles, too much compromise and dilution of defined legislative purpose. There has been too grievous a sacrifice of the high, paramount strategy of Canadian broadcasting policy -- the strategy of identity, character and of that information which is the very foundation and integrating, organizing component of any group, society or nation.

This is not a depressing conclusion. It is a cool, if very tentative attempt to recognize the facts of a situation. In this situation there are also great hopes, opportunity and resources. There

are superb technical efficiency, inventiveness and success in the stations, networks and cable systems, in the telephone and other telecommunications services essential to broadcasting. This great system, one of the largest in the world, serves nearly 98% of the Canadian people. There are also vast financial revenues.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to moan". What the situation now commands is an urgent and renewed sense of the prime and essential purposes of broadcasting, a fresh and wise use of imagination and, above all will, will, will, the determination to achieve these purposes.

Lest premature conclusions be drawn, these short qualifications or explanations are offered. One: No advocacy of total public ownership is proposed. Two: The private sector is necessary and the stations, networks and cable systems require an adequate return on their capital investment. Three: Entertainment is what most people in the home want most of the time. Four: No principle of excluding non-Canadian programmes is for an instant considered; the principle of free choice is fully asserted. It would be folly to cut ourselves off from the thought, business, art and entertainment, this "Instant World", has to offer. Five: Broadcasting is an economic instrument. Advertisers have a role and consumers require information. Six: The hope is not controversy or conflict, but a consensus which gives due consideration to many different Canadian interests. Further, this paper is mainly but not exclusively concerned with the immediate present and the next few years. What technology we will choose, or if we do not deliberately choose, will be imposed, is not either ignored or here examined.

II Culture: Entropy: Society

Culture is used as an expression for social organization or integration, and entropy as an expression for disorganization or disintegration. They are related here through the concept of information or communication. This paper, as is already evident, is then only the riposte of a general reader. He has consulted no oracles in Delphi or gods on nearby Parnassus, but only Pelicans, Penguins; Pans and other paperbacks. A discussion is not attempted of the thoughts of Matthew Arnold on culture, or those of Sadi Carnot, Clausius, Kelvin, Shannon and Weaver on entropy.

The pretentious words Culture and Entropy are here used to underline and emphasize the over-mastering, over-arching momentousness and significance of the communication of information in all forms of individual and social life.

Especially is it significant in the life of a highly vulnerable society, such as Canada. Canada's old association with and reenforcement from Europe are more and more forsaken or truncated or reduced. The dependence upon predominant continental connections is increasing. The basic east-west axis of nationhood, which the canoe,

canals, Confederation and the CPR confirmed, is under challenge by the powerful technological and corporation influences, including even the CPR chairman's sympathy for continental economic north-south associations.[1]

Each of us has his own respect for or suspicion of the word culture, and each his own definition. The late Marshall Herman Goering, when the word was mentioned, reached for his revolver. To Matthew Arnold, in his essay a century ago, Culture and Anarchy, culture was "getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world..." Secondly, culture, as "the very desire to see things as they are", was "a genuine scientific passion". Thirdly, it expressed "motives eminently such as are called social... the main and pre-eminent part".[2]

In terms more contemporary, culture in a society may be deemed to be information or the product of information. Information is the prime integrating factor creating, nourishing, adjusting and sustaining a society. "Properly speaking", wrote the late Norbert Wiener of the Massachussetts Institute of Technology in his Cybernetics, "the community extends only so far as there extends an effectual transmission of information".[3] "Communication", wrote Dr. Colin Cherry of the Imperial College of Science and author of On Human Communication, "is the substance of all social life. I would define society as a people in communication...a social group of any kind exists only in as much as its members communicate".[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, 700 years ago, offered a comparable statement.[5]

A society, a community, a nation, like any other organism, is a function of a network; society is organized, integrated and made responsive by information. In the human being, the central nervous system including the brain is that most powerful, most complex and highest of all networks of life --- a network of 12,000 to 20,000 million neurons. Each of these cells is, so to speak, a two-way electric and chemical re-broadcasting station, creating by means of its axons, dendrites and synapses, an incalculable total of channels or interrelationships.[6] In a society, in an individual, organism is message, organism is opposed to chaos, to disintegration, to death as message is to noise.

The wisdom of the community or society, balanced against the wisdom of the body is elementary, rudimentary, inexperienced and very, very recent. What, it may be asked, are the processes within a society of separate individuals which provide to the society something remotely similar to homeostasis, the wisdom of the body?[7] In a society, what are the parallels to be observed? How does society learn or remember or think? What is social consciousness? What are the channels in a society for the reception of information? What is the brain and central nervous system of a society? What in a society performs the function of a brain, responds to environment and regulates the relationships with the environment?

The simple question in any society is: How is the information which individuals receive distributed to them and between them, and what source controls and supplies that information? How is society conditioned? How programmed? The answer is the means of communication and whoever provides the information. Who are the "Controllers" who have the power to control ourselves and our community?

Here "words fly up", but "thoughts remain below". In sum, the argument attempts to suggest that whereas the human body, as inherited through the genetic code generation after generation, has millenia of experience as a single, unified system, sensitive and responsive to changes in the internal and external environment, human societies have only very recently developed rudimentary processes of social adjustment and social response.

The question evokes many nouns --- tradition, education, governance, co-operation, the voice of the Stentor, language, and many more, and for convenience, the real but loose expression, public opinion. All of them have a common implication --- information or the communication of information.

So much is summarily suggested to raise to the highest level of significance the meaning and weight of the word information and its opposite, entropy. Information is the core element of organization, integration, structure. To the extent that a society lacks information or control of information, the coherence of that society is restricted and without information, there is no society. There is entropy.

III Information: Autonomy: Decision

"It is possible", wrote Norbert Wiener, "to give a sort of measure (to the extent of the community) by comparing the number of decisions entering a group from the outside with the number of decisions made in the group".[8] This leads to the question of information and methods of communication in Canada and to the question of the balance between "the number of decisions" entering Canada from the outside and the number of decisions made in Canada and, therefore, the autonomy of the Canadian group or society.

This may have the sound of a nationalist note but if it implies the narrow, introverted, destructive a priori doctrine of isolation, exclusiveness, hostility and conflict, it is both regretted and rejected.[9] There is a wider community than a nation, and the human problem is the resolution of differences of interest without a nation's loss of the power of independent decision or the weakening or the dissolution of the wider community. Today technology, pressing towards wider unions and wider community, poses that issue. But the question is raised: what is the information upon which the Canadian society takes its decisions; who controls its selection and its distribution; and for whose purposes?

The larger bulk of the printed[10] and broadcast information distributed to Canadians is of non-Canadian origin. Daily newspapers are

almost entirely Canadian but a large percentage of the contents is syndicated, imported material. Motion pictures, films, film strips, tapes, records, are overwhelmingly imports. Books and educational texts come overwhelmingly from other countries. For the whole of Canada, in a recent year, comparing Canadian only with American sources, 41.4% of the educational texts were written and published in Canada; some 58.6% were of American origin, most of them, however, with some Canadian revisions.[11] In the field of comic books, 25 million were imported in 1969. The difficulties of Canadian book publishers are well known.

The position in broadcasting is familiar and is not amplified.[12] The CBC stations almost alone provide a majority of Canadian programmes. The CRTC's content regulations are exerting in the private sector a helpful influence, especially in radio, but American programming received on radio and television sets in Canada, whether transmitted over American or over Canadian stations, predominates, especially in the peak audience hours.

One example, not untypical of border cities, taking four Buffalo and four Toronto stations in the week of 12 February, 1972, gives U.S. programmes available 78%, Canadian 22%; motion pictures on television, U.S. 138 feature films, Canada, none.[13] Certainly, the exclusion of non-Canadian programmes is not desirable or, perhaps, practicable. On the other hand, Canadian competition is both desirable and practicable in programming and, on the evidence, Canadian programmes can and do hold and re-capture Canadian audiences. (In Mr. Pierre Juneau's words, we should have "the right to see everything...including ourselves".[13])

In the field of print, film and broadcasting, we do not see ourselves. Forty years ago, Parliament decided we should at least have that opportunity in broadcasting, and no Parliament has reversed that purpose. Yet is has not been fulfilled more than partially even by the force of regulation, and time after time the regulations have been watered down.

IV Purpose: Erosion: Reversal

In the House of Commons in 1932, these words set out the objectives of the first national broadcasting policy: "Canadians have a right to a system of broadcasting from Canadian sources equal in all respects to that of any other country. First of all, this country must be assured of complete Canadian control of broadcasting from Canadian sources, free from foreign interference or influence. Secondly, no scheme other than that of public ownership can ensure to the people... without regard to class or place, equal enjoyment of the benefits and pleasures of radio broadcasting". The words are those of the then Prime Minister of Canada and Leader of the Conservative Party, the Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett.[14]

These principles were the too-long delayed Parliamentary expression

of a national broadcasting policy, the first since broadcasting regularly began twelve years earlier in 1920. They were endorsed at the same time by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. MacKenzie King, and other party leaders, French - and English-speaking. A massive if not unanimous public opinion from every section of Canada led the House of Commons in May 1932 to adopt with one or no opposing vote the Bill enshrining those principles.

The reference of Prime Minister Bennett to "public ownership"[15] requires, however, the qualification which his speech quoted, the Commons Committee specified, and his own broadcasting statute of 1932 implied, that the public ownership proposed was not total in scope nor did it require the elimination of private ownership or private participation. Later Acts similarly required Canadian ownership, Canadian control and Canadian purposes, and gave undoubted primacy to the national service and to the public sector. The Liberal Government of Mr. MacKenzie King clearly and firmly set out those principles in the Act of 1936 creating the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and they are incorporated in Mr. Pearson's Act of 1968.

These statutes drew a most crucial distinction between an autonomous public corporation responsible to Parliament and state ownership or direct state operation. Both the Acts of 1932 and 1936, but not later legislation, also significantly incorporated the principle of financing public broadcasting by the audience through license fees paid for receiving sets, instead of by Parliamentary appropriations from taxation or by large dependence on advertising. These are important distinctions --- one, the distinction between state and public; and two, between finance from tax revenues and finance from the public by license fees or subscriptions.[16] There were other important principles implied or explicit: they will be touched upon later. All of them have been weakened, resisted or eroded.

Before the Act of 1932, private capital and competition after 12 years' trial had not created a national service. In 1932 there were indeed only 66 stations in the whole of Canada: their entire power as a group was only some 60,000 watts. Fifty-six of these stations used only 500 watts or less, 32 only 100 watts or less.[17] Canadian coverage after 12 years of private broadcasting[18] was, in consequence, entirely and deplorably inadequate, except in four or five larger cities. The first objective of the legislation of 1932 and 1936 was, therefore, the creation of a network of public stations of high power, supported by smaller public stations; the second objective was the multiplication of smaller private stations for local community service.

To finance the public system Canada chose the license fee --- of $2.00 per home --- combined with some advertising. From 1932-3 to 1951-2 this two-fold revenue financed the formation and programming of a national system under the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission or CBC, and revenue over the 20 years exceeded expenditure.[19] The first government grant from taxation was made in 1952. This must be emphasized. For 20 years there was no subsidy and no resort to taxa-

tion. In this period, public broadcasting supplied some 16 hours a day of national network programmes over public and private systems, compared with one hour in 1932. Private stations multiplied, their transmission power grew, and in the larger markets, they prospered.

The existing five radio and television networks in French or English, embracing in all 21 regular national, regional or provincial networks of public and private stations have been organized by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and they serve 98.6% of the population by radio and 96.8% by television.[20] The CBC also operates the international, armed forces, and emergency, as well as the northern services, and will use three of the twelve Canadian satellite channels.[21]

These are the planned creations of public policy and mainly public revenues, and not the result of advertising: advertising over the last 40 years could not have evoked them. A national radio network in private ownership was not even attempted and would not be profitable. The CTV network, an essential alternative television service owned by the larger private stations in Canada, provides service only in English and is predominantly a "big city network", where greater advertising revenues are to be obtained. Yet CTV is finding it difficult to finance coverage for more smaller places or to meet the 60% Canadian programming required of the CBC and independent stations by the CRTC.[22]

V Conflict: Finance: Dilution

To contrast what Parliament over 40 years has willed and what we have today would require a very broad canvass, and it is neither available nor desirable. Only a few quick statements, therefore, are submitted. One, the distinction between the public character and the state character of the CBC has been diminished. The state character has increased, is increasing and should be diminished. Responsibility of broadcasting to Parliament is, of course, paramount, but day-to-day autonomy of the public corporation is desirable. The trend towards greater and greater intervention by the Government of the day is neither an advantage to the party in power nor to the operations of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In the same period of years, Government policy has also made the CBC dependent to some extent on advertising and has involved at least its peak audience hours in the advertising market. The CBC has been thrust between two stools.

Two, the CBC is no longer self-financed; it is dependent upon annual Parliamentary appropriations of tax revenue, a vast deviation from the original, wise policy and a close approach to potential state operation. Three, the publicly-owned and operated network of stations across Canada has not been completed and it was years before there were, among other possible examples, CBC television stations in Quebec City, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton or Moncton. Parliament willed the ends but was long and slow in willing the means. In consequence, the distribution of CBC programmes in most places depends on local private stations which use only around 50 or 60 percent of them. In those

places, up to one half of the CBC programmes pass through the air unseen and unheard. The CBC networks are thus dependent over the wide areas of space and population on private stations for distribution. This may have sound reasons but ensures built-in conflict between advertising and non-advertising CBC programmes on stations needing revenue.

Four, nor are Canadian programming and Canadian purposes predominant in the Canadian system as a whole. There are, using CRTC figures in 1971, 1497 Canadian radio, television, cable or rebroadcasting units. Of these, most are rebroadcasting units and repeater stations not producing programmes. The CBC operates about three in ten.[24] On the more numerous private stations, both in television and radio, imported programmes usually predominate. In addition, there is direct or cable reception of American programmes. The system was to ensure for the Canadian people "complete Canadian control of broadcasting from Canadian sources". It was not to provide, as Prime Minister Bennett declared, " private exploitation", but to be reserved "for the use of the people". There was also implicit in the earlier statutes the "pooling" of at least major revenues to ensure a central fund which could finance Canadian competition with imported programmes rather than dispersing revenues over too many spending units.

There was also the essential principle that no single religious, partisan, class, sectional, commercial or other interest would predominate; that reason contributed to the rejection of a proposed private system, subsidized by the Government but operated by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

What we have today is a large measure of concentrated private control over more and more of this great national instrument of stations and cable systems --- a one-way mode for distributing information and influencing public opinion by business and commercial interests. They are part of the Canadian community but a conflict of interest is inevitable between using revenues for Canadian programming and using them to increase profits and push up quotations on the stock market. This inherent conflict dilutes the Canadian purposes of broadcasting and as imported programmes are cheapest, it contributes to the absorption of the Canadian audience into the American entertainment and advertising market.

Other contrasts[25] between the established purposes of Canadian broadcasting and the existing practices or structure are not drawn here. To those purposes, a new and urgent challenge has been developing[26] with little Parliamentary awareness, for 10 to 20 years with the introduction of cable television and, indeed, cable radio distribution. Cable, in the words of the CRTC,[27] presents "a real and immediate danger...to the Canadian broadcasting system...Unlimited penetration by United States stations on a wholesale south to north basis raises the question of the survival of the Canadian system". The chairman, Mr. Juneau, himself has stated, "unless controlled, cable will probably destroy the capacity to produce programs in Canada and will pro-

bably destroy the stations themselves".[28]

The announcement by the CRTC on 16 July 1971, however, will increase not decrease the very possibility which the CRTC fears. It will enlarge the threat to Canadian stations, CBC or private. The CRTC, perhaps by inevitable compulsion as well as on the principle of equitable service all over Canada, will now allow cable systems to use microwave to import up to three American television channels. This policy would allow cable systems anywhere in Canada to become rebroadcasting stations or unofficial affiliates of up to three American networks. That is, the CRTC is ensuring the opportunity for the "unlimited penetration by United States stations on a wholesale south to north basis".

This is a startling reversal of some 40 years of Canadian policy and a rejection of the principles of Parliament --- and the CRTC --- once persistently required. It is in fact a surrender of the national purposes of Canadian broadcasting policy long required of both the private and publicly-owned sectors. Yet there has been no action by Parliament, no public hearing specifically on the new policy of the CRTC, and little or no newspaper or public discussion whatever. This is not an attack on the CRTC. The CRTC was set up after the problem was allowed to arise. What is to blame is governance and its unresponsiveness to a significant, useful innovation.

These statements are made here on the sole basis of what the CRTC in February 1971 or earlier has said about "the real and immediate danger" to the Canadian on-the-air stations. If the statements made are wrong, then up to 16 July 1971, the CRTC was wrong. Let it be hoped that both this paper and the CRTC are wrong. But let the Canadian people decide; let there be real public discussion. And in the discussion, let the alternatives be discussed. Is exclusion an alternative? The answer is no. Is the dissolution or restraint of cable an alternative? The answer is no.

An alternative method exists. It is the importation of American programmes by a number of regional "gateways" or antennae set up by the CRTC or other public agency in a few places across Canada to receive and distribute American and ultimately more distant programmes to Canadian cable systems region by region, instead of on a south to north basis by some 350 individual cable businesses, rightly and necessarily motivated by business purposes. To repeat, on 26 July 1971, Mr. Juneau said: "Unless controlled, cable will probably destroy Canadian capacity to produce programs and probably the stations themselves". These suggested "gateways" would create that control. These gateways would also permit the removal of American commercials without interfering with American programmes. On-the-air stations have not been permitted to directly import at their own will American programmes, as either affiliates or as rebroadcasting stations of American networks.

A summing up and conclusion of this lay estimate of broadcasting have arrived but regrettably with little in the way of recommendations. Nor will any trite comparison be drawn between culture and entropy. In

terms of Canadian purposes, strategy and Canadian reception of Canadian entertainment, education and information in the home, the trend seems to be irresistably towards running down, disorganization, randomness, that is towards entropy. The CBC, the national broadcasting service which provides the largest and much the most varied Canadian programming in French and English, and the widest national coverage, is being ground between increasing dependence on government intervention and upon advertising. In the private sector also this has a measure of relevance, but the main impediment to the private operation of Canadian broadcasting is its inevitable reliance upon the expectations of shareholders and of advertisers and the compromise which this subservience imposes upon the use of broadcasting for the information, delight and satisfaction of the audience.

But the private advertising system that North America has developed is not the only structure through which investors may receive a return and advertisers sell their goods. In Britain's private sector, the first emphasis is placed on programming and upon the true purposes of broadcasting, even though private programme contractors often make fortunes from advertising revenues. In Italy, during a day's broadcasting, there is only one 15 minute advertising time segment during prime time and several others during the day: these produce one third of the income of RAI, the public sector.[29]

The central conclusion is, then, that the financial basis of both sectors in Canada is ill-founded, should be reconsidered, and must be improved. The expansion of cable systems will impose this need. In the public sector, too great a dependence on taxation and advertising, and in the private sector on advertising alone, introduces or imposes restrictions upon the purposes of broadcasting, diverts it from proper concentration upon programming, and places too large a motivation in programming on serving the needs for revenue and the compulsions of the investment and advertising markets.

Particularly does this subordination to advertising purposes force Canadian programming into reliance upon imported productions and to their selection primarily in the interests of advertisers or investors. While this paper wholly concurs that American and other programmes should be imported, Canadian programmes should have greater access, promotion and financing. The motives and forces dominating Canadian broadcasting, partly in the public sector and largely in the private sector, are not sufficiently the right motives and forces. It is not the public or the private sector as such which is to blame. It is the basis which government or business, which political or commercial pressures have imposed on them.

The basis is wrong. The basis shapes and selects the purposes and the purposes are wrong. These purposes have a certain justification and may have a proper role, but there are more essential purposes than those of the market place. These are the purposes of Canada, of Canada's highest strategy as a Canadian society. There is the need, first, to develop greater and happier human beings and, second, to make greater and happier Canadians as human beings.

References:


* Paper presented at the seminar of the Royal Society on "Communications into the Home," Ottawa, March 27, 1972.

1. N.R. Crump. Address to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, Toronto, 7 June, 1971. Mr. Crump believes in "a cohesive federal power," constitutional changes "further strengthening . . . the relative power of the provinces vis-a-vis Ottawa" and consideration of the question of how far the "structure of our East-West economic alignment" should be re-oriented, for example fuller integration of Québec and Ontario "into the heartland of North America."

2. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960)

3. Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics, 2nd edition. (Boston: MIT Press,1965), pp. 157-158

4. Colin Cherry, Journal of the Royal Society of the Arts, (London, February, 1966), pp. 160-161. Dr. Karl Deutsch of MIT repeats the same theme: "Processes of communication are the basis of the coherence of societies, cultures . . . Membership in a people essentially consists in the wide complementarity of social communications." Nationalism and Social Communication, (Boston: MIT Press, 1953), pp. 60-67, 71, 80, 141

5. Aquinas: "On Princely Government," in Aquinas: Selected Political Writings, ed. A.P. d'Entreves (New York: MacMillan, 1959), p. 3

6. John Von Neuman, The Computer and the Brain (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958). The lower estimate is usual but more recent methods of calculation raise the total towards 20,000 million cells.

7. W.B. Cannon, The Wisdom of the Body (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1932)

8. Wiener, op.cit., pp. 157-158

9. "Mechanical inventions and social innovations . . . were devised by two different kinds of human minds, and both were suppressed for long periods by a third type of man, who cared neither for technology, nor for social progress, but only for power. Regrettably, history records mostly the deeds and misdeeds of this third type of man." Dennis Gabor. Innovations: Scientific, Technological and Social (Oxford: 1970), p. 1

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10. The following statistics were used by Mr. Pierre Juneau, Chairman of the CRTC, in an address to the Empire Club of Toronto, 24 February, 1972: ABC list of magazines: Canadian 51, American 375

11. This information appeared in the Educational Courier, May 1969, and was supplied by the Canadian Graphic Arts Association.

12. Juneau, op.cit.

13. Ibid.

14. House of Commons, May 18, 1932

15. The Act of 1932, Section 11, also provided for the expropriation of stations.

16. A license fee of $1.00 annually was initiated in 1922 to pay for technical inspection, raised to $2.00 in February 1932 and to $2.50 in 1938. In February 1953 the fee was abolished and an excise tax of 15% of new radio and television sets and parts applied. The annual license fee paid for radio may be compared to the monthly subscription for cable television service, with the difference that the average cost of $5.00 per month or $60.00 per year is rather larger.

17. Minutes of the House of Commons Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1932, p. 3

18. The Government of Manitoba owned two stations and the University of Alberta one. The CNR owned half a dozen stations. The Manitoba stations were sold to private companies and the CNR stations to the CRBC.

19. CRBC Annual Reports, 1933 to 1936-37, and the Report of the Royal Commission of 1957, Table, p. 451

20. CBC Annual Report, 1970-71. Ottawa, p. 60

21. This satellite will have 12 channels, four of them for telecommunications services, and will come into operation in 1972 or 1973.

22. Public Announcement, CRTC, Ottawa, 10 March, 1972

23. Thus, the CBC was deprived of its revenues from license fees in 1952-53 and from the excise tax on sets in 1957-58, and thereby made dependent upon annual Parliamentary grants and advertising. The independence of the Board of Governors was reduced by appointing paid presidents after 1945 and some appointments of part-

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time Board members had some political colour. In the House of Commons, the CBC became a frequent ordinary subject of debate, some of it, however, entirely necessary.

24. CRTC Annual Report, 1970-71. Ottawa, p. 95

25. For example, the rise to primacy of the private sector and the relative decline of the public sector. In 1971 there were 1497 broadcasting units in Canada, including rebroadcasting and cable systems. The CBC owns and operates 428 units or about one in three.

26. In 1957-58 the CBC proposed making a study of cable; in 1965 a public enquiry proposed to include it. Both were advised to leave cable alone. Two other official bodies were later advised of the problem but did not take it up. The problem of broadcasting in relation to cable is, then, essentially the consequence of 15 or 20 years' unresponsiveness by Government. By 1967 the cable audience in Canada viewed programmes over cable systems of which 77 percent was owned or controlled in the United States. These systems have or are being sold to Canadian companies. Instant World. (Department of Communications, Ottawa, 1971), p. 74

27. Public Announcement, CRTC. Ottawa, February, 1971.

28. Quoted in Time magazine, 26 July, 1971.

29. In Britain, commercial television is carried out in competition with the public BBC by "programme contractors" who are licensed to use stations in certain cities and on certain days, required to provide programmes on these stations, and meet the costs by the sale of advertising time. All stations in Britain are publicly-owned. In Italy, RAI is a largely government-owned company.

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# Issues in Canadian Cultural Policy

Let's face it. There are cultural issues, and they are acute -- particularly in a country which is attempting to become genuinely bilingual. Marshall McLuhan has implied on various occasions that emerging cultures may be able to leap from an oral tradition into electronic communications, without going through a long penance in the linear print mode. He has suggested, for example, that francophone Québec has been able to leap into film and television more quickly and successfully than les maudits anglais; the francophone leap has been from a relatively static society into film and TV-land. This is heady talk, and not without value, but it does little to explain the real development of Canadian culture -- a development which may well be instructive to other societies, even though a Canadian, viewing his own cultural household, may today find the ménage in some disarray.[1]

The main issues in Canada's cultural policy -- federal and provincial -- came into sharp focus with Expo '67, the international exhibition which alerted everybody to the vital energy of audio-visual media, multi-media, and mosaic experience as modes of "reading". These relatively new modes will not supercede print, but they expand our whole consciousness of the nature of communications. Yet despite a growing body of literature in the field, Ottawa bureaucrats were asking in 1967: "What do you mean by Communications? -- A letter, telegram, phone call, newscast?" As for "culture", they were reasonably satisfied that it had been taken care of. There were such institutions as: a National Gallery and National Museums; a National Film Board; the publicly-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; the Canada Council, charged with supporting artists, the performing arts, and post-graduate study and research in the humanities and social sciences; a Board of Broadcast Governors to regulate all forms of broadcasting; a National Library. And there were many other official or quasi-official cultural organizations -- provincial arts councils; the Dominion Drama Festival; Jeunesses musicales; the Banff School of Fine Arts; and (though not ready for Expo '67) a grandiose National Arts Centre in Ottawa -- $48,000,000 worth of opera house, theatre, "studios", restaurants, bars and terraces, with street-level space for bookstores, etc.

In all this, Canada had followed a course somewhere between the British and American patterns. There was a state-owned broadcasting system aimed at uniting the country's vast terrain, just as the railways had done in the nineteenth century; but private broadcasting was also encouraged. The major cultural institutions were largely autonomous, financed principally by public funds, but buffered against political

interference by governing Boards of responsible citizens. A Minister (frequently the Secretary of State) reported to Parliament for these institutions; but the planning and programming of cultural affairs was not in the hands of politicians, as in most socialist countries. The Canadian system seemed ideal: it escaped the apparently chaotic laissez-faire of American commercial enterprise and the caprices of "foundations"; and it was perhaps more open and mobile than the class-oriented cultural scene of the United Kingdom.

So what was wrong? Two gigantic things: first, the information explosion of television, electronic recording, photo-copying, satellite transmission, holography, and all the modes of information processing, storage and transmission that had arrived or were about to arrive. For the moment, technology appeared to have outstripped content; new government policy was drastically needed to regulate both communications technology and (in the face of a new nationalism) to show some concern about indigenous content.

Second, thanks to both the social sciences and the media, a new concept of "culture" had risen to prominence — almost preeminence. Culture had become "the observed style of a society": it could be high or low, popular (mass) or elitist; it could be regional, national or international. Objects of both "high" and folk culture began, in one sense, to look like fossils, and the institutions which preserved them, like mausoleums. Culture had to be alive, or come alive in the NOW; and for the young in the sixties it demanded a gut response, an emotional involvement, as much as analysis, reflection and documentation.

As these developments became sharply visible, the presiding issues in Canada's cultural growth were articulated, but progress in meeting them was slow. When a new Liberal government (under Pierre Elliott Trudeau) came to power in 1968, there was euphoric talk of "the democratization of culture", a slogan for which there were dozens of interpretations. Did it mean bringing high art to the masses via touring exhibitions, performing troupes, television and radio? Did it mean mini-Expos such as Toronto's elaborate Ontario Place? Did it mean new support for popular and folk culture? The preeminent policy issues finally appeared to be these:

1) The need to apply the Constitution to make Canada a genuinely bilingual nation (a problem that exists in more than twenty nations, ranging from China and India to Switzerland and Belgium).
2) The necessity of regulating the media to better serve the national interest in terms of content, geographical coverage, and information storage, retrieval and dissemination.
3) The need to channel constructively a rising wave of "new nationalism".
4) The need to revamp the educational system, particularly at the post-secondary level.[2]

And more vital than any of these complex, interrelated issues, one dominant problem: Would Canada veer towards an official culture along the lines attempted in France under de Gaulle and André Malraux as Ministre des affaires culturelles? Would it prefer to grow like Topsy? Would it develop the pattern of semi-autonomous institutions championed in the Massey Commission's Report on Arts and Letters? Or would new strategies be devised?

In 1965, in response to the Massey Commission's report, the Canada Council was founded, dedicated to "excellence" in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Prior to 1968, while the so-called "quiet revolution" was secularizing Québec education, and developing a theory of "two nations" in Canada -- one anglophone and one francophone or Québécois - the Pearson government (Liberal) had already launched a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, jokingly known as the "Bye and Bye" Commission. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (to be known as Radio-Television Canada on April 1, 1974, with a big "C" logo) had lost its major influence in the licensing of new stations, public and private, and the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) has become the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC), with broad powers to regulate all the technology and licensing of radio, TV and satellite broadcasting. New support for the private film industry was planned; and though education was the exclusive domain of the provinces, the federal government got deeply into building universities and financing them on a per-student basis. Ottawa also planned an educational TV network -- a national "hardware" facility which would presumably get its content or "software" at the discretion of the provinces. (This kind of lock-step network, incidentally, had proven unworkable in the U.S.A. almost ten years earlier.) Plans were also underway in the sixties for administrative centralization of the museums.

But almost all of these plans were unsatisfactory to the Trudeau government. Ten days after the election of June, 1968, the Secretary of State (who reported to Parliament for most of the cultural and information agencies) made it known that the Prime Minister had very little faith in senior civil servants -- the "mandarins" at the deputy minister level. The new government would govern, and it would move fast. In the period from 1968 to 1972 the thrust towards "democratization of culture" produced the following phenomena:

- A vast growth in the personal staff of the Prime Minister and other ministers (John F. Kennedy style in the view of a variety of observers).
- The creation of a Department of Communications with somewhat hazy responsibilities. Initially, the Department created a series of task forces -- a term more favoured than Royal Commission -- to investigate all the technological and cultural implications of media.
- Increased powers for the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC), which by 1972 included quotas on "Canadian" content in both radio and television, and even broadcast music.[3]
- Implementation of legislation creating a Canadian Film Develop-

ment Corporation (CFDC-1968) with an initial fund of ten million dollars to invest in or lend to private film projects which were demonstrably Canadian.

-The creation of an agency called "Information Canada" which would inform Canadians about all aspects of the federal government, and answer citizens' questions. Predictably, the opposition parties saw this as a move towards the politization of information about government, and the agency became known in the press as "Misinformation Canada."

- New support for the National Library and archives, including the preservation of film, tapes, photographs, etc.

- A senate commission (chaired by Senator Keith Davey) to study the press.

- Aid, by way of subsidy through the Canada Council, to the publishing industry. (The Ontario government gave direct provincial aid to save a leading publisher from insolvency, and has since made unrestricted grants to publishers through the Arts Council of Ontario -- an important innovation).

- The promise of a global policy to regulate all aspects of film and other audio-visual media -- a promise which by 1974, despite numerous reports from both the public and private sectors, succeeded only in producing an informal "green paper" for further discussion. In this crucial area of communications, the government has been very slow to understand and formulate policy.

These were all hopeful signs of the government's awareness of cultural and information problems, but no one in Ottawa seemed to have either the authority or experience to think them through. Senator Davey's report on the press was the most concise and illuminating document produced. Numerous reports were not released, even in summary, and the public had to rely largely on press releases, trial-balloon policy statements, and the investigative work of journalists in such newspapers as Toronto's Globe and Mail and Star, and Montreal's Le Devoir. The government was, in effect, spending more time in putting out political fires than in building a coherent Canadian cultural base. The interrelations of cultural issues was perhaps the greatest lacuna in the government's planning; and the most naive result was the separation of the technological aspects of media from content. Some highly-placed politicians were persuaded, for a while at least, that "the medium is the message". Thus, the Department of Communications, now reporting to Parliament for the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC) has been principally concerned with licensing and hardware. But the quality of cultural expression is left to such programming institutions as the CBC, the Film Board, and the museums. The Film Development Corporation cannot decide whether it is a bank, or an agency which should promote "quality" in Canadian films. The bridge between the medium and the message has not been built -- not even designed.

Still worse, in a period of monetary inflation and high unemployment -- an international problem in the seventies -- the government has introduced two new cultural programmes in the name of "democratization" of culture: Opportunities for Youth (OFY) under the Secretary of State; and a Local Initiatives Programme (LIP) under the Department

of Manpower. These programmes in 1972 cost close to two hundred million dollars , more than double the combined budgets of the Museums, the Film Board, the Canada Council and the National Arts Centre. There have been the usual instances of cheating and mismanagement of funds in these programmes. The Auditor General's Report for 1972 indicated forty-four cases which violated the law, either through "considerable weakness in the execution of projects" or the authorization of projects which did not conform to "fixed criteria and objectives". Twenty of these involved fraud that merited prosecution. Among 424 projects, 169 were so poorly documented that the Auditor General could not verify their accounts.[4] This kind of cheating or trichage is the chaff of any political mill -- beloved by journalists. But the deeper implications of such programmes are staggering.

What the Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and the Local Initiatives Programme (LIP) reveal is that a great deal of cultural programming is falling directly into the hands of the party in power, and that expensive cultural decisions are being made in the privacy of a minister's office. What experts are involved in making OFY and LIP awards? They are not visible. Indeed they may be no more than functionaries under the direct control of a minister. In short, a degree of politicization of culture has arrived -- in American terms, patronage, or the "spoils system", though these are not merely post office jobs or other minor functions. The most glaring example of cultural politicization is that in 1972 the LIP programme spent more money on drama than the Canada Council. Needless to say, morale in the semi-autonomous cultural institutions and the universities has declined severely. No one can be unhappy when the Secretary of State buys a theatre for Le Théâtre du nouveau monde, makes a generous grant to Jeunesses musicales, or the Shaw Festival in Ontario. But such arrangements smell of political largess, and imply a denial of the pattern of cultural support which is relatively independent of politics.

Perhaps the best way of attempting to untangle very recent cultural issues is to face the post-Expo wave of nationalism -- the demand of many citizens to control the physical and human resources of their country. The first impulse was towards economic nationalism (which is not my subject here). But the next wave -- the gut response -- was cultural, and it has become a major concern for both the federal and provincial governments.

For example, in the late 1920's, film was regarded merely as entertainment -- a grand substitute for the circus, with an audience of millions. The provinces levied a jealously-guarded entertainment tax on each theatre admission; but the distribution and exhibition policies were entirely controlled by American, British and French corporations, in that order of importance. The National Film Board, founded in 1939 by John Grierson as a wartime information agency, arranged a free-distribution network for schools, church halls, unions and cooperatives; but NFB films appeared all too rarely in commercial houses, since programmes for the mass public were packaged outside Canada. This was Canada's first and greatest media sell out.

What the new nationalists demand is cultural autonomy over what will be seen, heard or published in Canada. Despite Prime Minister Trudeau's initial claims for an international culture, Canadians want to know more about themselves, and they want increased access to the means of communication. This, in a nation just over 100 years old, is a kind of puberty. Canadians are saying that they don't want to follow the patterns of John Bull, Uncle Sam, Comrade Marx or Chairman Mao; they want, in Emerson's phrase, to establish an "original relation to the universe".

But the new nationalism is in many ways merely chauvinistic, and the prime example arises in education — identified by Buckminster Fuller in I Seem to be a Verb, as the key problem in wester civilization. In Canadian primary and secondary education, about 80% of the textbooks come from non-Canadian sources. In 1970, over 90% of the audio-visual materials used in schools were produced abroad. At present, companies such as Encyclopedia Britannica Films, McGraw-Hill, and others in Britain and France have virtually eclipsed Canadian educational publishers and film makers. Yet Canadian governments have done almost nothing to confront the need for using materials by and for Canadians. (Time and Reader's Digest have enjoyed privileges which gave them a considerable advantage over Canadian publications; in 1975 the federal government is promising to cancel its favours towards these magazines.)[5]

Some examples: 1) Since education is a provincial domain, the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation both proposed in the 1960's programmes not for schools, but for "youth" and "continuing education" (education permanente). Such programmes could be used at the discretion of provincial departments of education. These programmes were, in general, too expensive for any single province -- studies in language-learning, demography, the north, Canadian history, etc. But the federal government, on constitutional grounds, was very nervous about such proposals, so a number of excellent projects were rejected, though the flow of foreign films continued unabated. At one point in the late sixties, Radio Québec proposed a comprehensive series of programmes to teach French as a second language. That programme foundered because in Québec, as in Ottawa, there was no clear policy on media. In Québec, film and videotape projects were divided among Radio-Québec, Radio-Canada, Le ministère de l'éducation and L'office du film du Québec. And by 1973 there was no solution to these problems. The National Film Board failed equally in a language-teaching proposal to the Secretary of State, though there was a huge budget available to promote bilingualism. The establishment of a Canadian Council of Ministers of Education in 1968 was a good move if not (as yet) productive.

2) In this period of rapid development in the media, most governments have failed to understand that film, tape and disk technology are becoming as standard as the typewriter was in the 1940's, and that students should be learning to use these media, while libraries or "information centres" should be making a/v documents easily available.

The library, indeed, must regain its place as the core of the university's resources. But one wonders whether libraries must undergo their first massive coronary before real aid is available. At the moment, administrators may recognize the ailment, but the usual prescription is only aspirin.

3) But libraries or "media centres" cannot help the national consciousness greatly unless there is a substantial production of native software in print, film, tape, disks -- all the media; and it is here that governments have most seriously failed. If a nation cannot record its own cultural experience, including the original creations of its artists and thinkers, then its cultural diet will come from elsewhere. I do not suggest an exclusively Canadian diet; we need a balanced diet, but we need to cook and enjoy our own dishes.

4) A related problem concerns faculty in higher education. In the thirties and forties, Canada was short of well-trained academics, and the vacuum was largely filled by British scholars. Militant Canadians soon began shouting "Limey Go Home!" Following World War II, with a generation of war babies and a spectacular growth in the universities, the academic vacuum was filled by American scholars, and the new Canadian nationalists began crying about American academic imperialism. The real flaw, of course, was that in a variety of fields Canada had again failed to meet the foreseen needs of higher education, while American universities had produced a surplus of Ph.D's who moved in to fill the vacuum. In some areas the academic background or nationality of a scholar is not a cause for anxiety. But in such areas as economics, political science and history, the situation is delicate. A political science department which is largely American or British or French is probably insufficiently informed about Canadian culture, and ill-prepared to understand the Canadian situation. Yet Canadians should not be playing the cry-baby game of tantrums over "academic imperialism." A cooler law of academic supply and demand was lost sight of in the 1950's and 1960's, and Canada is now illogically suffering a certain affront to its amour propre. In any case, the extreme Canadian nationalist view that nobody foreign can instruct us is surely exaggerated. True, we have everything that the media can bring us; but good minds know no national boundaries, and we need them, as every country does. The real problem is media-consumerism, rule by the advertisers.

The new nationalism raises grand problems of cultural autonomy and self-recognition -- the need for indigenous media software. But four further issues must be identified. First, the creation of software must be accompanied by an adequate distribution system. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may have solved the national problem, but it is weak in distributing its software internationally, because it often pays performing fees for only single-shot broadcasts and telecasts; after that, the material becomes archival or is erased. Commercial film distribution is almost wholly foreign owned, and the National Film Board's free distribution system is so over-taxed that it can no longer provide service to schools. The first answer seems to be that provincial departments of education should establish film libraries to serve their own constituencies; in this situation they often reject

NFB prints as too costly. In some areas, schools simply copy films on videotape and use them, regardless of outmoded copyright laws. For the young, a direct response to the problems of film distribution is "underground" film and cooperative networks which will bring experimental work to committed audiences.

This situation leads directly into international problems of copyright law. New photocopying methods such as Xerox and the more expensive Lande camera for photographing and printing any material, have at once destroyed both copyright and censorship laws. The resolution of this vast problem can only be reached by international agreements; but the problem affects authors and artists very seriously. In Canada, artists have formed a militant association called Canadian Artists Representation (CAR) which demands that artists should profit not only from the sale of their work, but from reproduction of their work in any form. The association is very young, and still exploring the possibilities of improving the income of artists; but the initiative can only grow. Artists are learning that the law can help them if they define their problems clearly.

Beyond the copyright situation, the public is increasingly demanding access to cable or ultra-high frequency channels. Some of these efforts are described elsewhere in this book. The fact is that citizens are unwilling to wait for government action, and are testing their strength and initiative against both government and commercial interests.

That leads me to a final point -- perhaps the most optimistic and naive in this overview of cultural issues. Young and imaginative teachers and students are not willing to wait for legislators and commercial interests to develop a coherent communications policy; they are creating a/v "documents" on their own; they are copying films and long-play records. This is a grass-roots response to the media, and youth is miles ahead of government regulation. A/v images will be available to us all in the near future, and at low cost. Canada is not alone in this electronic revolution. It will be world-wide, just as the dissemination of information is world-wide. Then how do we control mass media? Will governments in power control information? Do commercial interests control information? Will the press or advertizing agencies control information? Or will Canada continue to develop alert and flexible semi-autonomous agencies which are largely independent of political and commercial control?

That raises a final and all-important question. Canada, apparently, has wanted a non-political and non-commercial control of information. The issue is immense, and grows at the speed of technology; it is (even before language) the prime cultural problem that Canadian society faces. There is no indication yet that we have a viable solution; but at least we know what the problem is. Unhappily, the drift seems to be towards placing the media in the hands of huge Canadian corporations. This is no doubt better than foreign control, but will Canadian corporations be more responsible than American, British or French corporations? As the Broadcasting Act states, communications

must be "in the public interest". The prime interest of corporations is profit, and to date private radio, television and cable television have not served "the public interest" well enough. One even wonders whether citizen groups who increasingly demand local access to cable channels are entirely honest: they may simply wish for a plurality of programme possibilities; but they could also be politically oriented -- asking for media power which could short-circuit the democratic electoral process as we know it.

Coda: By Canada Day, July 1st, 1974, the federal government had established a new advisory agency, the Institute for Research on Public Policy, modelled in part on the Brookings Institute in Washington. Its first priorities have nothing to do with war. Communications is fifth on the priority list but studies have already begun in this area. The Institute is independent; its reports will be advisory only. In a new Bill, C-5, the federal government furthermore proposes to add telecommunications of all kinds to the authority of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC), which would now become the Canadian Radio-Television-Telecommunications Commission (CRTCC), reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Communications. Private industry (including Mother Bell) opposes this legislation, since it appears to give the CRTCC almost unlimited power in regulating media, and thence cultural affairs. But the principle of keeping media power out of the hands of politicians and commercial interests seems to be working in Canada. The danger is that our media people could become tame fence-sitting types. The most reassuring thing is that we have gifted young people, artists, writers, broadcasters and teachers who will lead the wave of the future in Canadian life.

References:

1. The major public documents in the background of this discussion are all available from Information Canada, Ottawa. They are:
   - The Massey Report (Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences) 1951
   - The Uncertain Mirror, Vol.I or the Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media (Chairman, Senator Keith Davey), 1971
   - Instant World: a report on telecommunications in Canada, Department of Communications, 1971
   - The Department of Communications "Green Paper" on a plan for communications in Canada. 1973
   - Bill C-5, Government of Canada (in second reading in October, 1974)
   - Many specialized papers on communications prepared by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC) and the Department of Communications (DOC)

2. Le Devoir, Montreal, 16 fev., 1974, p.4

3. Le Devoir, Montreal, 21 fev., 1974, p.5; on Canadian content in Radio-Canada (CBC)

4. Le Devoir, Montreal, 19 dec., 1973, p.13

5. Canadian advertisers, under the law, have been allowed to charge advertising expenses for space in Time and Readers' Digest as business expenses. The federal government proposes in 1975 to cancel this arrangement, a move which should improve the competitive position of Canadian periodical publishers for advertising income.

Selected and edited with comments
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# John Grierson on Media, Film and History

In a study of Canadian communications it seems appropriate to have a facet of John Grierson's work discussed and represented. Originally the editors planned to use a talk of Grierson's presented to a conference of educators, civil servants and film makers at the National Film Board in the Spring of 1971. But the conversational style and the elaborate use of references unfamiliar to those not acquainted with Grierson's work, the Film Board, and aspects of Canadian history since the Second World War, made the editing of this talk for a printed presentation impossible. Instead, we used substantial quotations from the discussion and two interviews which he gave at McGill University, connected by commentary to assist in providing context and continuity. This article therefore, attempts to represent his opinions rather than ours and we have suppressed any critical commentary on points on which we might have differed.

In 1970 John Grierson, founder of the National Film Board of Canada and often described as father of the documentary film movement, returned to Canada to teach at McGill until his death in 1972. He frequently pointed out that he had desperately wanted to return to Canada which was such an important part of his life. His period here provided an opportunity for a retrospective consideration of his previous work as well as an opportunity to shape some of that insight and thought into a form which would influence the future. Although he published little in the last two years of his life, he lectured, provided interviews and wrote reports for universities and governments. This work provides a rich source for examining John Grierson's beliefs and the intimate link he saw between thought and action, theory and praxis. All of these entered the very fabric of Canadian communication policy and practice, especially at the Film Board.

Grierson was fond of pointing out that his life work was conceived in the university and that, therefore, it was appropriate that he return to the university. He argued that education was the most important mass medium in our society. The documentary movement itself was the transformation of the motion picture into a conscious instrument of educational policy. It is interesting, therefore, that Grierson saw this as rising out of his university studies:

> I developed the documentary idea in the Political Science Department of the University of Chicago in connection with the melting pot theory. I felt that films should be used like newspapers to bring alive the 'new America' to immigrants from Europe. The films would ease their paths to becoming Americans.[1]

He spoke of his conception of documentary as rising directly from the nature of the motion picture:

> The origin of documentary film goes right back to the beginning of the motion picture. The motion picture is a window on the world. The camera views things from close up, with a microscope or a telescope as it were. It can see things in detail, upside down, sideways and roundabout...We formed the documentary movement as a deliberate attempt to do what the cinema had not yet done. There was no model...for us to follow in mobilizing all the forces of cinema toward the discovery and illumination of the ordinary world...[2]

Grierson's family background, his Calvinist upbringing and his socialist commitments all dictated that he concern himself with the world of the worker, the ordinary man and with a sense of moral commitment. Motion picture, as an ideal instrument for doing this, required liberation from the forces which had directed it towards the world of entertainment for entertainment's sake. By bringing the ordinary life of ordinary people to a higher level of consciousness, film could become an instrument in social reform and change of values. At the beginning of his thoughts about documentary, Grierson could observe:

> I was interested for a really low reason. I looked at theatre in England and Scotland; I looked at the movies in England and Scotland, and the working class people were comics. This I did not like. I thought, being of the Clydeside and of that fearsome persuasion of radicalism, maybe we might start at the beginning and to hell with all the economics and political theory. We might get working people somewhere in the theatre and on the screen in some other guise than as comics.[3]

While Grierson's thoughts may have been sparked off by the problem of the "melting pot" in the United States, his radicalism rapidly moved him beyond this to the awareness that film could change the international assessment of the problems of the working man. From Chicago and Lippman he had learned the importance of the democratizing influence of media, but his traditions caused him to carry it much further than these original perceptions.

His sense of the ordinary context, developed at Chicago, permeated his thought and it might be with considerable shock that many "cultured" supporters of Grierson learn that the press and especially the yellow journalists of the 20's were central to the way documentary developed:

> This I think McLuhan's been on to, because I hear he's talked very courteously about his particular period. But I said this active verb in the headline of the yellow newspaper is the key to something or other that I suspect is an aesthetic judgement — I didn't use the word linear — an aesthetic judgement as distinct from a contemplative judgement. The active verb

> which changes things, represents a dramatic pattern which turns the report into a story, which in fact it was doing because people were talking about stories...And so the whole theory of the dramatic film came as a theory of newspapers, the theory of newspaper reporting, and not as a theory of movies.[4]

In his career Grierson came out of the university experience to become a writer about movies before he became the leader in the documentary field and the evolution of government film-making in Canada. Like McLuhan in the sixties he demonstrated the continuing relation between theory and practice by noting:

> I didn't come out of the sky writing about the potential of movies as an art; as I said, I came out of the university, concerned with the particular problem of education which the modern world had created. And, of course, the McLuhan thing has merely confirmed in my view the development which from an academic consideration we were at least partially aware of at that time. But oddly enough in terms of yellow journalism, not of television as McLuhan put it, and certainly not of movies.[5]

For this reason, Grierson probably held a life-long respect for print journalism which manifested itself in his attitudes toward television as well. In a pre-Watergate world he could observe that "the newspaper today is more important than TV in creating and crystalizing world opinion".[6] Like many other Griersonisms this may be an overstatement, but it certainly calls attention to an imbalance when television alone is credited with massive influence.

Grierson based such conclusions on a constant sense of comparison between the effects of different media within society. He spoke of the need for a "comparative observation" of media as part of its ongoing study:

> Just as a film has many unique qualities, so does the printed page. Remember the incident in which a Saigon authority shot a Viet Cong officer in front of the camera? That was one of the disgusting episodes of the Vietnam war which went around the world immediately, and made the world shudder.
>
> However, the same scene had different effects on TV and in the newspaper. When it was shown on the front page of the Montreal Star, there was great protest. The editor of the Star asked me to put it to my film class at McGill why there was a different reaction to the same story in the two media. The answer from the students was: didn't I know that TV wasn't for real?
>
> That is a very interesting point. Television isn't for real. It is so caught up in blood and thunder of a romantic fictional kind that when something with real blood and thunder comes up the impact is dulled.[7]

His teaching was an important way to make contact with a significant segment of society and he could translate a student's observation back into a further analysis:

> What she said was, see, you asked a silly question, television isn't for real. When I have the great honour of meeting Mr. McLuhan I'm going to say, 'Listen I'd like to hear you on this thing, it's been a reality for you. but it hasn't been a reality for somebody else'.[8]

What Grierson is arguing has some similarities with ethnomethodology since he is stressing the relevance of different kinds of accounts of experience given by different individuals with different social situations, each stressing their own fund of personal knowledge and interest. From such a basis he could generalize about the different media, arguing the case for the importance of education and film:

> The influence of TV and newspapers is, of course, very important, but only in relation to the educational process. Nevertheless, film does have some advantages. It gives all people a chance to see distant or microscopic places which, until now, only specialized scientists and wanderers have seen. The moon shot, for instance, is one example of how splendidly actuality is portrayed on TV.
>
> Television is nothing else than a window on the world, a small screen showing pictures on the move. However, it is a bad version, because the images appear very static. A theatre presentation of motion pictures is superior to TV except for newscasts.[9]

Film was obviously Grierson's main love and one which he stressed and defended. Yet his assessments in that area could be just as surprising as with the other media. Partly it is a question of his peculiar standards and the way they related to his particular emphasis on communication. He could say that "Fiction was a temptation for trivial people" and he could argue:

> ...I am not interested in the vulgarities of the private personal life in any way whatsoever. I don't want to see it unless it is so significant that we interpret it within the Aristotlean canon -- we must feel that we are looking at the fate of man. There are many stories in the movies that aren't worth a damn, including all of Bergman. Who cares a damn about these lonely old bastards, your dirty old men? Who cares a hoot? I like his style, I like the way he uses film, but his stories get between me and Mr. Bergman. I'm just not interested in his people.[10]

For Grierson who held firmly to a philosophy of social responsibility with debts to Marx and Calvinism, "it is an illusion...(to) consider other people because they're other human beings. We're interested in

other people because they're part of the body politic". The function of media had to be related to a function of social responsibility. For this reason many of his views when looked at baldly might seem unpalatable, yet they often drew attention to little emphasized areas of responsibility. Documentary film, for example, had a spin-off since it brought together the government and the film-maker, a union many film-makers strongly protest. Grierson, on the other hand, would argue:

> The great thing about the documentary film is that it reintroduced the artist to government service. Government patronage had occurred in Italy during the Renaissance when artists worked for the Catholic Church or Lorenzo de Medici, but the phenomenon had not happened in modern government until we started with documentary.
>
> Government service is very worthy as it involves the long-range interests of the nation. Here the artist has the opportunity to do something constructive, and to help establish a country's identity nationally and internationaly.[11]

This view brings what seems like almost historical concepts back to life within the contemporary situation. Grierson saw integrity as central to genuine communication and hence he saw the film-maker who adopted a role with government as "the king's good servant".

> If a film-maker is working for a national agency, he must be a loyal civil servant and work within the framework of government information policy. He is not making films for himself, but for the government. He can't do anything he damn well pleases.[12]

In case governments act improperly the film-maker must however be prepared to speak out:

> The day a government information service runs only for the interests of the party in power, I would have nothing to do with it, nor would any information man worth his salt.
>
> However, if a government film-maker wants to say something outrageously difficult he must resign. He should be an honest man and stand on his own two feet.[13]

In other words, the loyalty is ultimately to the public and to preserve that public it is important to exercise first of all integrity and devotion:

> You may not tell lies to the public. Your duty to the public is more important than your duty to your wife and children, not to say your bloody conscience before God. You can tell private lies. That's O.K. That we do in fictional movies. But public lies may not be told.[14]

Because of this intense commitment to the public and to a standard of integrity, Grierson became as is well known, deeply involved in education, propaganda and film making. He could speak of his transformation of the British workingman image with deep pride:

> For a short time, I heard people in one great London theatre applaud the faces of the British working class. Then I knew that I had really done something. Besides making a picture I had made the audience applaud themselves.[15]

This sense of image-making could be transferred from a class to a nation concerned with potential domination as well as eventually becoming a foundation stone in the creation of the National Film Board of Canada which he described as "a poetic centre for Canada". His sense of the problem, once again rose out of his experiences in the States:

> During the Twenties everyone in the United States was attempting to create the new America...The same thing ought to be going on here. Canadian film makers should be using film to put forth the new Canada.[16]

But here again there were standards and they could be applied to analyze propaganda efforts which were still great films, like Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will.

> News: Does one judge a film by its technical quality or by its social influence? I am referring, for example, to the technically well-done movies of the Nazi film maker, Leni Riefenstahl.
>
> Grierson: Let's talk about Leni. Her movie, Triumph of the Will is, without question, a splendid picture. I doubt if another film had as much impact on people. But it had a bad influence. It was on the wrong side.
>
> If I were secretary of state, responsible for the creative agencies of this country, and a picture were made of Riefenstahl quality and with a Nazi outlook, I would see that it was banned. The first test of a film is not whether it is attractive or not, but whether it is good or evil. The work may be very beautiful, but it must not be allowed to lead people to destruction or to pervert youth.
>
> I think there are lots of beautiful films going around today that shouldn't be presented because they are teaching people defeatism. On that subject, I am much more cruel than most. I have seen beautiful things in my life and I've known many artists, but I'll shoot them all down if they don't represent the good of the next generation. The protection of its youth is a nation's foremost duty.[17]

Grierson, therefore, would have supported some forms of censorship

and he would have sacrificed technical virtuosity if it were in the interest of preventing irresponsibility. Yet he could reverse the techniques of propaganda, and use them himself:

> I've been in the mind-bending business and don't want to be outside it wherever I am, whether for the British government or the Canadian government, whether against the Nazis, or -- well what we did to poor Leni Riefenstahl really was a shocker. You know the way we took that absolutely magnificent film of her's, Triumph of the Will, turned it inside out and made a picture which you have at the Film Board, Mr. Commissioner, Leni's Triumph of the Will, we turned it into a thing called The War for Men's Minds, which by the way, I don't know whether that was the first use of the phrase, but it became one of the great cries after the war -- The War for Men's Minds -- when Archie McCleish and Benton and those bohunchins at Chicago started with their wild schemes.[18]

The retrospective look of those final years in Grierson's work were concerned with balancing the past. Propaganda had always been counterpoised with aesthetic effect in his mind, but he felt that he had had to be more concerned with the propaganda or mind-bending aspects and less with aesthetics. He was aware of the equally important function of the aesthetic in a theory of communication and film and in his period of return to Canada could suggest:

> On the debit side, I regret I got too involved in film as a propaganda force, and gave myself little room to get involved in it aesthetically.[19]

Yet part of this is typical Grierson understatement, for he was constantly raising aesthetic questions, arguing aesthetic points of view and balancing aesthetics with the other components in his philosophy. The problem of the aesthetics of film led directly to problems concerning its ultimate continued success or failure.

> Another regret, though it is not a personal one, is the fact that film seems to have lost the impetus it had in the thirties. Its power as a medium has been dissipated into several directions.
>
> Film is at its most epic and most important when it is simple. Lately, film has become very "artsy tartsy" because of the auteurs with their 8mm cameras and 8mm attitudes. The 'art' film is a kindergarten film.
>
> The other direction film has taken has been into the entertainment world. I have said that 'fiction is a temptation for trivial people'. In the fiction-romance film, producers capitalize on the vulgarities and intimacies of personal life, which have little significance, and in which I, for one, am not interested. The subject of alienation, which so many

> pseudoartists are treating in their films today, should be beneath the notice of a true artist. I regret that so many film makers seem to have lost the creative way.[20]

Such rhetorical statements about the creative and aesthetic factors must be read, though, in the total picture the later Grierson developed, where his insistence on quality of perception and mind was always paramount. This led him to praise the artistic intensity of the work of underground film maker Stan Brakhage, and to find the creative and intellectual stimulation of Yugoslavian film maker Dušan Makavéjev so great that he stayed up all night talking with him when he visited Montreal. Contrarily, Grierson could split with his long-standing Canadian friends, criticizing films such as Paul Almon's Act of the Heart as seriously over-rated, yet praise the work of Don Shebib. His attitudes, therefore, on the "art" film or the fictional film must be seen as the kind of dialectical counterpoise, the intellectual toughness for which he was famous and which he obviously intended it to be.

In his teaching, as he considered the aesthetic area, he developed a broad traditional and philosophic perspective which grew out of his early training in a Scottish university, a training which blended with the traditions that had contributed to McGill, Toronto and other older Canadian universities. Speaking of his students he suggested:

> There's no fooling them. You can't start talking about aesthetic, at least I couldn't, without finding yourself into the damn nonsense about the sublime and the nature of comedy. You've got to get back to the antimony of Kant somewhere along the line. You can't talk about freedom without getting back to Plato. If you're going to discuss the individual artist in relation to the state you'd better take account of Trotsky's Literature and Revolution. You'll find yourself inevitably having to tell them to go look at Arnold's Culture and Anarchy. However it is, you find yourself returning to the authorities and you'll find them returning with you to the authorities.[21]

So when Grierson used the term aesthetics he saw little conflict between theory and practice, between criticism and creation, and he saw it as part of a long ongoing dialogue throughout human history. Insights concerning the yellow press, journalism or TV melded easily with insights about Marx, Plato or Kant. But his aesthetic concerns were never purely abstract or theoretic for he was intimately concerned with what had happened in the practice which created the history of film:

> From the very beginning the motion picture has first of all the quality of being parapatetic. What is the implication of its being able to get around? All right, you've got a window on the world. What is the implication of your having a window on the world? What are the frontiers you're going to discover with this window on the world? You begin to talk about lenses. All right, you can add a microscope to it.

You can not only do these simple things, you can have slow motion, you can have speed up motion, you're adding these things. And then of course there's the word montage. You begin to put different things together. Not to please as the poet does, unfortunately, but at least you can put them together, and you can put them together to create an idea, like Eisenstein. You can even put them together to create a feeling, an affection, or perhaps a poetic attitude. So you get these qualities, and then of course once you get sound you've got all the keys of the kingdom, because you've not only got noise.

If you even want to know the difference that noise brings, just think of your own Canadian image of unutterable loneliness which is getting up at some godless hour like five o'clock in the morning on some lake in Canada and smelling two million years of primitive vegetation, except all your fresh water smells like hell to the primitive alien. But there in the middle of that unutterable silence you hear a loon. The moment you hear that loon you know what silence is about; you've suddenly heard not the proof of sound but the proof of silence. With sound, of course, you've got this thing which is noise. You've got what we found out about very early. By the way, in those days, those among you who are interested in the art of the cinema might possible consider that for years when we were using sound and experimenting with sound we weren't giving a god-damn about the sound film. We were trying to save the spirit of the silent film.[22]

Such statements were accompanied by detailed descriptions of actual films in which Grierson had participated, communicating an enthusiam which could not have helped but be contagious if it had not already been a preferred medium by the student audiences which he most frequently addressed. He could speak of the "wonder", the "bubble" of film and, with an irony, observe, "but not too much of that please at university, or people get excited". From his statements about saving the spirit of the silent film in the new era of sound, it was a small step to a fascination with the effect of combining sound and image:

And over and above that, of course, you achieve this gorgeous thing that you can play asynchronistically -- what you can do by putting sound in a different beat with the image is nobody's business. I talk from some cold blooded and joyous experiences during the war of what we could do to Mr. Hitler by having the beat in our discs -- well it's asynchronism -- we will not go into further detail. Incidentally, what you can do by slow motion at the wrong moment is, of course, rather splendid. I remember when poor old Hitler -- and I say poor old Hitler because of things we did to the poor man -- he did a little sort of dance. He just lifted his foot in that curious way and did a sort of whirlygig. Well I slow-motioned that gesture and you've

> got no idea what it looked like for a great German Duce, whatever he was, to do a sort of jig in slow motion, because every single frame, my friend, is sissy -- and that we duly put out as our version of Compienne. And there was one moment I think that he might be pleased with, when we got hold of that very serious march of the Germans down the Champs Elysee -- you know, when they conquered Paris -- and all we did, talk about asynchronism, all we did was to take the German music off the film and put on the Marseilles -- an interesting difference when it comes to mind-bending.[23]

Whatever, the aesthetic it was always ultimately in the service of the educative propaganda that Grierson saw as documentary. So while he could praise Flaherty, whose mastery of the art he so well recognized, he could also qualify that praise from his own standards:

> In the case of Flaherty, when things didn't look sub specie eterni old Flaherty fixed it that they did look sub specie. For example, we went to British Samoa and found that all his life he was looking for the great story of innocence and, by the way, this wasn't fooling because he was a very glorious person. As Bogart used to say, 'You see he was a drinking man and from that all great things' -- according to Bogart and myself in my day -- 'all great things derive'. But he went down there in pursuit of the great sub specie and the great picture of innocence which had constantly eluded him, and he found that the girls, these handsome girls down in British Samoa, were dressed by the missionaries up to the neck in nightgowns. So Bob, in his pursuit of innocence, took the nightgowns off them and stripped them to the waist, and that's the way they are in Moana. Even Flaherty had a sort of deviation from this finding of the truth, seeing it the way it is, and there comes a moment in all our aesthetic lives when we're not very sure that making it the way we want it is the greatest contribution perhaps to the public purpose, the public good.[24]

For Grierson, aesthetics and public ethics are ultimately not completely extricable. So that while he would have wished to have done more with the aesthetic, and he recognized its overwhelming importance, feeling it to be more generally overlooked than it should be, he ultimately subjected all creation to a series of values posited by his view of the public good. In response to a question in an interview by Ron Blumer of the McGill Reporter concerning cinema vérité, some of whose advocates suggested that you can get at truth by simply turning on a camera, Grierson replied:

> There is no such thing as truth, until you've made it into a form. Truth is an interpretation of a perception. You've got moral laws to affect it, you've got social laws, you've got aesthetic laws. What is truth isn't a nasty question at all -- it's a question that is forever with you when you're a film maker. It's to make your truth as many-faceted and as

deep, as various, as exciting, as possible.

> You don't get truth by turning on a camera, you've got to work with it. What is the truth of a human being, what is the truth of a street, what is the truth of a city? You don't get it by simply peephole camera work. You must yourself tell the truth at all times, and tell it to your subject matter. You must never sneak or steal.[25]

Grierson does not permit the achievement of an "easy" theory of social communication or an easy philosophy of the role that public control ought to play in such a process. Neither does he allow for an easy rejection of the theoretic, the intellectual, the artistic or the aesthetic. In practical decisions his complex view of the two came through as much as in his reflections on a medium. Dealing with a question concerning the justification of cinematic poetry, Grierson suggests:

> You would find it difficult to find any one of the poetic films in the whole industry of the cinema that could not possibly be justified, either under the commercial category, or because the government sponsoring thought it valuable for the country, or the industrial entity found it valuable for the industry image.
>
> In other words, there are many forms of social justification. McLaren isn't an exception, but it takes a long, long imaginative policy of national public relations to see the social justification for McLaren and experimental films of that kind. The justification is easy because it means that Canada can hold up her face in the art world abroad. And a distinguished face. It is good that Canada had Norman McLaren to export to the cultural centers of the world. In fact, McLaren has been the most notable single cultural export of the Canadian people for the last 20 years. It is one of the paradoxes of the whole business of propaganda and national projection, national expression -- that one single figure like McLaren can do more for a country -- for very little money, because McLaren is not an expensive item for the Canadian government -- in the way of bringing prestige to the Canadian people abroad than many more extravagant and grandiose projects. And when you're talking of social justification, include also that particular domain of social justification.
>
> So we've got several domains, haven't we, by which we can excuse poetry? In fact, I'd be hard put to think of a way in which one could not find a justification.[26]

It was this constant concern with the relation of the public and the medium that led him into teaching and into stressing the importance of the teaching of media. He spoke with respect to this to a group of Canadian individuals in film and in university teaching. His choice

to move from his TV programme in Scotland to teaching in Canada was partly a result of a desire to explore questions:

> In fact, I'd been asked by one or two universities in Scotland to prepare a report for them on a subject that I was very unsure about, but which interested me very much and it was: How can we within the disciplines of a university discuss the best media in such a way as not to get the poor university involved in all this mystique of communications, all this messing around with the making of 8mm films by 8mm minds? How can we really face up to the mass media which you have said in the past had a great bearing on our public life, without really vulgarizing the whole process of academic teaching and academic acquisition of knowledge?[27]

That exploration led to a report which he wrote for the administration of McGill University, which was completed the spring before he died. It provides a conclusion to the three aspects of his retrospective thinking about media on his return to Canada:

"There are two special reasons why the mass media are a useful area of study at the university level:

All students read newspapers, see films, watch TV, etc. The mass media represent not only a common area of observation for all students but an area of observation vitally affecting them as individuals and citizens. That is to say, they represent a common area in which some of the basic principles normally associated academically with political science, aesthetics, social psychology, etc. can be examined. That is to say, they represent an area of observation and vital interest common to the students of different faculties. That is to say, they represent one area of observation and vital interest in which the so-called "divide" between the sciences and the humanities can be bridged. That is to say, they are thereby a proper concern for university policy at a high level.

This will be doubly apparent if we take account of the need commonly expressed by students to have an area of common exchange where the students' own powers of observation analysis and expression are as important as their acquisition of knowledge. Uniquely, it is one area where students of all sorts have their own personal experience to build on and to feel creative about at university level. What we have in the mass media for university purposes is a sort of mental trampoline for the students to bounce on. No doubt there are others, not least in the students' debating societies, but the mass media area is again unique in that there are many facets to its truths. Everyone whatsoever (I found) feels that here is discussion he can get into and one subject on which he has something personal to say.

I emphasize these two points i.e. the mass media as a common area of observation and the mass media as a mental trampoline for student expression because they were not in my mind when I began my lectures.

The surprising development came not just with the vitality of the discussion in the seminar but with the increasing interest, variety and ease of the papers presented.

My own approach to the discussion of the mass media was much less speculative than most. I was interested specifically in what concern with the mass media came within the normal disciplines represented by political science, aesthetic, and social psychology. I moreover confined myself as far as possible to what was demonstrable. For example, the so called "language" of the popular newspapers has been developed in our time and is readily demonstrable in its nature and discussable in its influences, against the specific background of say, the American 'melting pot', the growth of the American cities, the development of civic spirit organization in the U.S. generally, and the development of national spirit and national unity in the U.S. in particular. Not only is this demonstrable but it was in fact demonstrated at the outset of this particular mass medium development in the Political Science school at Chicago.

Nor is there any pressing need to conjure up "subliminal" influences when there is so much evidence available, to reveal and discuss, of purposes actually intended and served by the popular newspapers, loyalties deliberately inculcated and processes of propaganda of one sort or other deliberately - and overtly - imposed on the news. Speculation does, of course, arise where great impacts have been made, and influences experienced, which were not intentional, but derived from the innocent taken-for-granted assumptions of particular times and surroundings.

The heroic and other dramatic values reflected in the popular newspapers of, say, the twenties and thirties, represent a valid area of observation; but, in this matter, the popular film with its international circulation and impact on distant and differing societies provides a more remarkable area of study. The fact that so much of the nature of the language and the influence of the newspaper (and of the film) has been long observable (and in fact has been long observed and foreseen and planned and carried out) puts a premium on the organized appearance before students of actual practitioners.

This should be taken into account and not only for the contribution these practitioners make to the study of the subject. The meeting with practitioners and the direct contact with practical creative forces not only add a useful assurance to academic exercises, but may well help to debunk some of the more 'mystical' speculations which presently derive from the communications enthusiasts. Most important of all is the fact that this contact with makers (Scots: maker equals poet) gives to the student a valuable personal contact with creative experience actually in the making. I was surprised by the effect of presenting to students individuals who were in fact their own near neighbours. A principle is obviously involved of some importance to a university. From my own experience, I would say I should have done more

in this direction, and in respect of all the mass media.

I shall have something of the same sort to add later in respect of experts at the University, introduced at key points in the discussion to provide an illumination of basic principles: in, for example, philosophy, constitutional and international law, previous historical practice, ancient religious and tribal practice etc. etc. My own experience is that in this field of reference (i.e. the study of the mass media as a living process affecting the mind and the imagination in the present and the future) the practitioners and other experts will get more rewarding satisfaction from small audiences of mentally greedy students than from larger public appearances.

In the student atmosphere, practical experience certainly dictated, more than I originally intended, the course of the discussions. For example, from my own sources I had something to contribute on the following matters: (1) The development of the forms of the popular press and the American background of the '20s in both the cities and the small towns; and, with this, the attitudes of particular publishers, editors and columnists I have known. (2) the development of the language of the cinema, both in my own school of film making and in other schools I knew; and, together with this, the outlook of some of the originating film makers I have known. (3) The deliberate use of the cinema in propaganda on many levels of influence; and, together with this, the specific operation on different occasions of the film as a weapon of propaganda. In other words, film propaganda in so far as it is a known and practiced art. (Even in its "subliminal" aspects it is a known art which has produced its own various schools of thought and equally various practices.)

(4) My experience (more limited but at least indicative) in the production of films for under-priviledged peoples and to meet the needs of under-developed societies. (5) My experience in the distribution of films to under-privileged peoples and the surprising commentary this can provide on the assumptions, 'value-judgements' of Hollywood films (and western society in general). (6) My experience, (again limited but indicative) in the defining of the relationship of dramatic patterns to public demand, inclination, ambition, potential need, etc. and the consequential partial logic (fumbling coherence) of film development and star values, etc.

(7) My experience (not so partial this time) of access to the means of production and distribution; of the conditions (limitations and privileges) deriving from different sources of finance and authority: (notably governmental and national). (8) My experience as a theorist and practitioner in the national and international 'politics' of information and propaganda services: this theme reaching, as far as any, to the first principles governing or effectively qualifying, such concepts as 'freedom of expression,' 'freedom of the press,' 'the free flow of information,' 'the right to bias,' etc. (9) My experience (partial but over a long period indicative) in one particular field of television appeal.

I cite these areas of study for various reasons, but one in particular. They indicate in themselves a fairly wide coverage of mass media problems but without much recourse to speculation or mysticism. It is a salutary contribution to, say, the discussion of 'magic,' to have stirred a modest spoon in the making ot if and be able, to some extent, to define its working. And so too, in discussions of the 'subliminal.' There is much of a practical order to say, which will help correct the feeling of 'victimisation' and 'helplessness' of which many students seem to complain.

What emerges importantly from such a personal list of active concerns and actual activities are the gaps in the coverage. Obviously, in a long-term coverage of the mass media, there should be a far more considered account of e.g. radio (as a language), than I could give. There should be a far more penetrating account of TV experience, of the problems arising in news coverage and in their relationship with political and social authority. Likewise, the TV record (constructive and destructive) in the matter of public influence (personal, civic, provincial, national and international) can be practically demonstrated in programmes. I did not develop this aspect. There is, likewise, much to be done in drawing attention to and bringing the student mind to bear on, the relative influences of the different mass media and the possibly false assumptions now prevalent regarding these influences. Not least, there is much more to develop than I managed about the creative horizons now explored and still open to be explored, by each and all of the mass media.

I emphasize, as I did earlier on, that these themes, important as they may be in themselves to a consideration of our daily experience and citizenship, are principally important insofar as they provide common ground for intellectual and creative discussion at the university and a unique opportunity for one and all to express a personal concern and a personal viewpoint based on personal observation and analysis. It could provide a useful preparation for citizenship in action on one and every professional level.

I add that if such studies were to be developed in universities across the continent, they would create quickly a body of criticism of the greatest constructive value to the management and development of the mass media and particularly of TV and radio. I could conceive of this being considered a matter of national importance. Considering the influences (especially in television) now operating on sentiments and loyalties and on public opinions, and considering the influences presently affecting both political authority and political stability and now operating uneventually and even nonchalantly in television, it may very well represent a priority of national interest.

I have heard of other 'inter-disciplinary' exercises which came unstuck. For lack of common active cause, some of the contributors contributed all too much in terms of the old routine. With mass media, the subject matter is activist enough to secure better results; but, just in case, a lecture series of this sort might best be treated as a 'production'. A 'production' requires a 'producer'. 'In Hollywood,' says Sam Spiegel, 'the secret is we always have a bastard. If he is a dedicated bastard, you could get big pictures'."[27]

References:

- The sources of the two interviews are McGill News (March, 1971), an interview done by Darlene Kruesel and the McGill Reporter (February 24, 1969) an interview done by Ronald Blumer, a doctoral student in the Communications Programme. The talk which will be
1. available on tape shortly as part of a projected Grierson archive was presented to a conference on Communications Studies in Canada
2. sponsored by the Canadian Council and the National Film Board of Canada and at the urging of the then Government Film Commissioner, Hugo McPherson. This conference was co-chaired by Gilles St. Marie of the University of Quebec at Montreal and Donald Theall of McGill University. The Report was originally prepared as part of the Annual Report of the Department of English of McGill University under whose administrative responsibility the Interdisciplinary Graduate Communications Programme was developed.

3. McGill News, (Montreal: The Graduate Society of McGill University, March, 1971), p. 12

4. Ibid., p. 12

5. Manuscript of the taped conference on Communications Studies in Canada, Spring, 1971, p. 7

6. Ibid., p. 8

7. Ibid., p. 9

8. McGill News, p. 12

9. Manuscript, p. 23

10. McGill News, p. 12

11. McGill Reporter (McGill University, February 24, 1969), p. 4

12. McGill News, p. 14

13. Ibid., p. 14

14. Ibid., p. 14

15. McGill Reporter, p. 4

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20. McGill News., p. 15

21. Ibid., p. 15

22. Manuscript., pp. 10-11

23. Ibid., p. 12

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27. Appendix to the Annual Report of the Department of English, McGill University, 1968-1969, pp. 5-11

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**Content Magazine**

# The State of the Canadian News Media

The pity about the contemporary communications community in Canada is that we still seem to pay more attention to the hardware -- in which there's no doubt we specialize -- than to the input. Indeed, the news media of the day spend more time and effort and money developing technology than they do in immersing themselves in the kinds of journalism which the Canadian populace probably needs in order to understand the maze of sticky issues confronting most people today. Except for a buzz of activity at the turn of the 1970s, the nations's press and broadcast industries have, by and large, been marking time.

They've not been marking time in adapting new communications technology to the business of gathering and disseminating news to the Canadian public-at-large. For instance, the national co-operative wire service, the Canadian Press, has moved briskly into the realm of computerized data banks and cathode ray tube terminals and the country-wide chain of Southam daily newspapers now is experimenting with similar programs in their newsrooms. Some 58, or about half, the dailies in the country are being printed using cold type and the offset process.

There has not, however, been the same degree of attention or money applied to the editorial product. With the odd exception, the press -- newspapers, periodicals, radio and television collectively for the purposes of this essay -- still uses styles and techniques which were better left in the 1950s and 1960s.

Among the more critical sectors of Canadian society, and certainly among some in the journalistic profession, a great deal of optimism about the future of the press peaked in 1970 with the release of the report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media. The committee had held public hearings and had done a hefty chunk of research for more than two years, and the media, partly out of an awareness that the public was interested in the proceedings but probably just as much out of a knee-jerk reaction to unusual scrutiny, had faithfully covered the committee's work. When the report was tabled by Senator Keith Davey in December, 1970, the media offered lavish coverage. And then forgot about it -- or appeared to forget about it (to give them the benefit of the doubt).

One of the purposes of the whole exercise was to stimulate public discussion on the media, that least-examined of our institutions. Four years after the event, it still can be said that the committee -- specifically its chairman -- succeeded in provoking a good deal of discussion.

But what else did the Senate committee achieve? Apart from a surge of debate at the time, practically nothing at all. As a stimulus to new legislation, the report was an abysmal failure. But as part of what might as well be called a consciousness-raising process, its long-term effects could turn out to be more important. The public most definitely is more critically-aware of the media today than it was, say, in the 1960s. Which is good, for surely we need a society which can question its institutions, its processes, its very nature. But that questioning must be followed by modifications or new directions on the part of the institutions and where the media are concerned that does not appear to have been happening. Consequently, the public becomes overly-cynical, distrustful even, of the media. And, if the media are not serving up the platter of information which the public says it needs, if the media do not form part of what James Reston has called the leading edge of society, then the media are not taken seriously.

The tendency then is for the media to become increasingly an entertainment vehicle. In an era when complex subjects need to be explained, require interpretation, and must be put in context, the media are shirking their responsibilities. Their behavior is, at best, immoral, and, at worst, amoral.

Senator Davey, who followed up the release of the report with hundreds of speeches across Canada, found the public to be far more skeptical, far more cynical, far more bitter about the media than their owners appear to realize. In the Senate report, the committee referred to the "shoot-the-messenger" syndrome -- the tendency of the public to blame the media for the bad news they convey. After meeting enough people to have earned some expertise on the subject, Davey found that the shoot-the-messenger syndrome is alive and well in Canada.

The Senate committee considered the media, and made recommendations, in three main problem areas: (a), the questions of media diversity and media concentration -- the phenomenon of more and more outlets falling into the hands of fewer and fewer owners; (b), the whole question of quality, and how well the public is served by the media; and, (c), the problem of Canadian cultural survival -- how the media affect the sense of nationhood. In some of these areas, the results of the report have been fairly gratifying, in others disappointing.

More voices: The real guts of Keith Davey's report was its recognition that the media, in economic terms, are natural monopolies. The industry exhibits a natural tendency toward concentration, a tendency which militates against the public interest. The report pointed out the extent of concentration (77 of the country's 116 dailies were controlled by chains or groups, and 176 of the 369 broadcasting outlets) and suggested how the government could arrest this trend -- chiefly through establishing a Press Ownership Review Board, which would decide whether proposed mergers were in the public interest.

The Canadian Radio-Television Commission (similar to the FCC in the United States) already is following this function in the broadcast

field; and it is the CRTC's stated policy that inter-media mergers (ownership of a cable system by a newspaper, for instance) generally are to be discouraged.

The lack of a corresponding review agency for print media has led to the inevitable result: There are dramatically fewer independent newspapers than there were even four years ago when the Senate committee tabled its report. The argument against a CRTC-type control over mergers, sales and purchases in the print media runs to the effect that broadcasting needs governing because there is limited air space and licences are held in the name of the public whereas there is no such restriction on the newspapers or magazines.

Given the economic realities of the country, this is a specious argument. For people to be well informed, they require a selection of information sources. If more and more of the sources have common ownership (and it follows that most then will share news resources and journalistic attitudes), the public is not well served. Ergo, some form of governmental intervention may be necessary.

The trend toward concentration will continue, unless the government acts to modify it. New amendments to the Combines legislation, which give the government more flexibility in disallowing mergers which are against the public interest, could be applied in the media field with excellent effect. Or at least they could have been a few years ago. By now, the trend toward chain ownership is so far advanced that it may be time to advocate sterner solutions -- such as dismantling some of the chains, or forcing them to sell some of their properties. The courts ordered IBM to "unbundle" in the United States; and chain dominance of the daily field in Canada now has approached the dimensions of IBM's dominance in the computer field. Some people have suggested a form of no-strings-attached subsidization of news flow may be one answer. It would be an incredibly-difficult thing to administer -- perhaps an impossibility -- but it is a viewpoint being espoused more frequently by enlightened politicians and journalists, though not by publishers.

There's one encouraging counter-trend in the picture: The periodical industry in Canada, despite the burden of those grand old Easy Riders, Time and Reader's Digest, has never been more diverse. Government grants have performed part of the job which the Senate report suggested should be handled by a Media Development Loan Fund (another recommendation never acted upon by the federal government). Unfortunately, under the existing ad hoc system of grants, most publications can't hack it long enough to survive. It is heartbreaking to see so many fine Canadian publications -- many directed at specific topics and audiences -- burst onto the scene and wither and disappear after a few issues.

Time and Reader's Digest, giants in publishing in Canada as they are elsewhere in the world, enjoy special privileges in that advertisers can deduct 100 per cent of their ad costs from taxable income. This

effectively makes Time and Digest ad rates lower than those of the hundreds of other foreign publications which flood into Canada. The two publications combined rake in more than half the magazine advertising dollars in Canada -- at the expense of native Canadian publications.

Senator Davey's committee, and numerous other groups and individuals, have long advocated that Time and Reader's Digest lose their special status and drop their disguise as being Canadian publications, which they most assuredly are not. The federal government, at last word, apparently is finally taking a look at the possibility of withdrawing the exemption afforded Time and the Digest. The key issue, as expressed in Cultural Sovereignty: The Time and Reader's Digest Case in Canada by Isaiah Litvak and Christopher Maule of Ottawa's Carleton University, is "not whether Canadians should be denied the opportunity of reading foreign publications, but whether a foreign publication the editorial policy of which is formulated in another country in the context of its value system, should be allowed to print under a Canadian guise and be assisted in this pretense by Canadian legislation".

Against such odds, small Canadian magazines are faring better than they did a decade ago. Part of their limited financial success no doubt is due to the dissatisfaction growing numbers of people feel toward their conventional suppliers of information, the newspapers. Because the dailies are not meeting the public's needs, specialized publications have cropped up, many of which have formed the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association, a grouping of 55 small magazines (total circulation about 750,000) which is a clearing house of ideas and serves as a lobby for expanded advertising and government support of an indigenous industry.

One of the assumptions of the Davey Report, as it has come to be called, was that the media, along with the arts and education, are indispensable to developing a sense of nationhood -- Canadian cultural survival, really. Periodicals, because they are usually national in character, are especially important. Some progess has been made, and while the magazine industry may not be exactly healthy, at least it's showing signs of life.

The CRTC has provided a good example of what a little resolution, backed by the proper legislation, can accomplish. Chairman Pierre Juneau has resisted all the broadcasting pressures directed against him and emerged with policies on Canadian content for radio and TV which have strengthened -- indeed, one might almost say, created -- a viable Canadian music and recording industry.

Quality: The underlying assumption in the Davey Report was that the media's quality could be judged by how well they were preparing their audiences for social change -- taking the "surprise" out of the world by backgrounding trends before they become sudden and surprising events. For instance, how well did the media prepare us for the onslaught of the energy crisis? A public served by alert media might have seen it coming.

The committee's contention that the media's performance, overall, simply wasn't good enough provided the most controversial section of the report. The controversy acted as a prod, and did lead to some improvements, though, in retrospect, one would have to view some of the steps taken as purely token -- anything to avoid being legislated, as it were.

At the owners' level, the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association -- in collaboration with the Canadian Managing Editors Conference -- after several years of soul-searching has invested some of its funds and energies in editorial matters, instead of devoting itself exclusively to chasing advertising. The CDNPA and the CMEC periodically hold regional seminars and their newsletters now include a good deal of material on editorial content and journalistic performance.

More visible, although still weak in terms of serving as ombudsmen, are press councils in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and in a smattering of cities. So far, their effect as a spur to editorial quality has been more symbolic than real. The Quebec council, a well-funded, expertly-appointed group, will turn out to be the most effective, because its purview is all media, not solely newspapers. And it still is feeling its way; once it embarks on a comprehensive public education program, media owners in the province should expect to be kept on their toes. Councils in the other provinces peck away at petty complaints from citizens (granted, one of their functions) without treading in areas which could prove embarassing to owners.

Senator Davey says there's no question in his mind that the media are doing a better job today than they were four years ago. But, most of this is part of a process of natural evolution. The Senate report, of course, had a role to play -- and even now it is a sort of de facto text book in communications across the country. To be fair, most Senate reports get shelved and forgotten. Davey's still sells at Information Canada bookstalls, still helps people think about the media in Canada, still serves as part of the evolutionary process. And that in itself is a hopeful sign.

The fact remains that the media haven't effectively picked up the ball. And where segments have picked it up, it hasn't been run along very well. Journalists tried, are trying, but at this point even they seem to have lapsed into a period of lethargy. Perhaps it is the logical pattern: Following the euphoria of the Davey Committee days, and surface signs of improvement in the media, a vacuum has opened, partly the result of sheer exhaustion by those who spearhead any new advance.

Journalists across the country responded to a call for a national conference in 1971, the first-ever in the country, which was designed to assess the Davey Report from the reporter's position and to exchange thoughts on directions for Canadian media. They've met annually since

that first Ottawa conference (a second was held in Ottawa, the third and fourth in Winnipeg, in the west, and Moncton, in the east, and the fifth is scheduled for Toronto in 1975) and the conferences serve as, if nothing else, a yearly opportunity to reaffirm journalism's ideals.

The most significant item to emerge from the 1974 conference was a proposal for a shield law for journalists -- protection from having to break confidences, from divulging information sources in the interests of the public's right-to-know. The draft legislation was sent off to the federal government in Ottawa and while it is known that the concept has support on either side of the House of Commons, it is not likely to be given priority attention. Not until, probably, journalists are being thrown in jail for not revealing the names of persons who risk their careers for passing on facts which are considered vital for a public appreciation of an event but which authorities would prefer to keep labelled "Top Secret".

Indeed, the lack of action by the federal government in many areas of media probably can be traced to the office of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, whose relationship with the journalism community generally has bordered on antagonism, if not outright hostility. His criticism of the media has some foundation, of course, and it is fundamentally different than that exhibited by former president Richard Nixon in the U.S.

Trudeau has the view that many of the journalists with whom he has to deal, and ultimately the papers and stations which carry their reports, simply lack integrity. They pander to prurient interests, he thinks, and true, too often this is the case. He detects a parasitical behavior, and of course this has been a continuing trait of the profession -- or seen by some as a trait, when in fact the role should be seen as a critical liaison between the governed and those who govern.

Trudeau's private views notwithstanding, his government did establish the CRTC, which has immeasurably improved broadcasting in the country, and his department of communications, now headed by a former journalist, the inspired Gérard Pelletier, has undertaken some sweeping studies of communications technologies for the country. Indeed, Telecommission's examination of the hardware was an invaluable contribution to Canada's tradition in communications. Now, if only the same attention could be paid to software . . .

This is not to say that the spattering of full-fledged journalism schools we have in Canada are not nurturing the loftiest principles; on the contrary, they are doing yeoman work, as are some of the junior college programs flourishing across the country. Indeed, more students now are enrolled in communications courses -- some with a career objective, others existing purely to develop a critically-minded citizenry, a noble aim -- than ever before. And we may well find that the products of these curricula will help redirect the media of tomorrow,

for they possess a degree of social and cultural sophistication hitherto unknown and unused.

The problem is that journalism schools are only beginning to be taken seriously by a significant proportion of the nation's professional newsmen. The Toronto Star's Rae Corelli, in a report to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, noted that the medical school graduate is presumed to know the rudiments of anatomy, the law school graduate is presumed to know about torts, the engineering graduate is presumed to know something about material stress, but the journalism graduate is the object of no presumption whatever. His competence has been subjected to no test whose validity is accepted without question by a prospective employer.

It's true, and it's somewhat tragic, that the country still does not have an accepted standard for its journalism graduates. The country does not have a counterpart of the proficiency certificate awarded to young reporters by the National Council for the Training of Journalists in Great Britain. Putting it another way, the people who hire and fire on Canada's daily papers are forced to rely on two things: What they know about the curriculum of the applicant's journalism school, and what they know about the competence and integrity of its instructors.

In short, there's been a communication gap between the media and the journalism schools. D.G. Carmichael, of North Bay's Canadore College, says it is time the nation's journalism schools levelled with the newspaper business on their strengths, and on their limitations. As well, he says, it is time that the journalism schools invited the newspaper business to play a much larger part in the establishment of curricula and the creation of a universal yardstick by which journalism graduates can be judged.

While the media have been moving away from the pick-someone-from-the-street-and-train-him syndrome and paying more attention to the skills taught in journalism schools, they also have been, albeit on a hit-or-miss basis, implementing in-house training programs. The Southam newspapers, in particular, have established on-the-job training programs both for new employees and for long-service writers and editors who need to become familiar with new approaches in communications.

It is in Quebec, perhaps, that formal training in journalism achieves the most serious recognition. Indeed, the Quebec media, notwithstanding an unhealthy amount of ownership concentration, may be the liveliest, most thorough and most informative in all of Canada. Montreal, for instance, has no fewer than seven dailies -- five in the French language, two in English -- an unheard-of representation for a city of 2.5 million. Add to that a raft of weekend publications, and a dozen broadcasting stations in the metropolitan area, and Montreal must be considered the most vigorous media city in North America.

The bilingual (nearly) mix of the city has a good deal to do with this situation, naturally, but above that, or perhaps connected to it,

is an almost insatiable demand for information of all stripes, Québec is a very political province, and because political processes tend to produce "news" (in the conventional sense), media have devoted more energy to covering this arena than, perhaps, to most other subjects about which the populace rightly should be exposed.

Actually, the media's attention to politics is seen across Canada, and it usually is to the detriment of coverage of such areas as science, housing, medicine, education, technology, the arts. A few years ago, former Winnipeg Tribune editor and now communications consultant Eric Wells conducted a survey on the actual national news content of papers across the country, and the preponderance of government or political information was overwhelming. He took two American psychologists and stuck them away in a kind of exploration-of-space project at a Prairie university, with daily papers he sent them their only communication with the outside world. At the end of the experiment, they both wondered whether Canadians were only interested in politics. The vitality of the country and of the people, they found, were not reflected in the press. The situation has not changed appreciably.

If a fundamental purpose of mass media is to help people understand each other, the Canadian press has failed singularly. Certain papers make occasional forays into various regions and do, for instance, a series of articles. But this is not sufficient because the occasional forays do not capture the moods and the feelings of a particular region, and in Canada balkanization still is very much alive (and for the better, it can be argued, as opposed to a national conformity and uniformity).

Worse, Eric Wells thinks newspapers in particular don't even do a very good job of reflecting the society immediately around them. There is no intent as to why they publish, he says, except to sell more advertising. Newspapers in Canada, while perhaps on average wider-ranging in content than American papers, still insist, by and large, on reaching for the lowest-common-denominator. Papers in England and Europe, though, manage to hold huge circulations and still carry strong intellectual content. Wells believes that the intelligence and the curiosity of even the common, everyday public are much wider than most media practitioners recognize, which takes us back to the theory that today's news media exist primarily as advertising and entertainment vehicles -- not as conveyors and interpreters of information which people should have if they are to understand the forces which mould their lives.

Senator Davey was right in saying that a new consciousness has been growing among Canadians about their news media. It's just that, to some, the process is agonizingly slow. There is the realization that the public has a right to information in order for there to be a more democratic participation in decisions made for society. The obvious companion to the right-to-know is the right-to-tell, and that is the realm of the journalist, as a communicator. Better understanding among men is the operative phrase.

It has been said the seventies will be remembered for Man's new concern about his environment. If we regard the environment as the whole complex set of conditions in which we live, then the ways in which information is gathered and distributed must be considered to be of paramount importance. Pollution of the mind may be just as hazardous as destruction of our physical health through pollution of land, sea and air. In this respect, the media have a crucially-important task to perform; the media, then, comprise an ecology force, at once social and political. Philosophically, if not materially, the media are a public trust.

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# The Politics of Information and Culture During Canada's October Crisis

Almost 25 years ago a Canadian economist, Harold Innis developed a theory maintaining that changes in communication technology have widespread physical, structural and cultural implications for a given society.[1] Using historical evidence from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome and Medieval Europe he documented that the replacement of clay tablets, papyrus and later the introduction of paper plus printing, created new monopolies of knowledge and power. The twentieth century electronic revolution which stresses long over short haul communication is no exception to this general rule. According to Innis and McLuhan it has had the result of increasing the speed of communication and reducing its cost to those who control the information hubs, while making it more difficult for people in outlying communities to talk to each other.

Structurally the electronic revolution has led to the decentralization of communication activities and the centralization of authority. Witness the latest attack on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) program centralization in Toronto which is supposedly quite insensitive to mid-western and western communication needs. Culturally this revolution has narrowed content variety and homogenized people's conceptions of reality. The media with their monopolies of knowledge, Innis argues, have acquired the social power to produce official versions of the world which are fashioned from values stressing market perishability and political control rather than human adaptation needs.

Is it possible to submit some of these theoretical claims to empirical test? The lower cost and increasing speed of information dissemination in the twentieth century, as well as the tendency toward centralization of communication power in the hands of conglomerates, have been widely noted in many parts of the world.

Much less has been said about the socio-cultural implications of media development. Few U.S. theorists, according to Carey, have focused on the social implications of communication technology, the bias inherent in this technology, the media's symbolic power, let alone their role in the dialectics of cultural stability and change.[2] These oversights may be partially explained by the strong behavioral stance adopted by American researchers of human communication. They also reflect marked social, geographical and historical differences between the two countries. Both Innis and McLuhan have had to orient themselves in a land of vast physical size, with a strongly bi-cultural tradition and a population one-tenth that of the United States.

Canada, a colonial country opened up by French and English explorers, fur traders and priests immediately adjacent to a super power and peopled by diverse immigrant groups thinly scattered along a hundred mile strip above the 49th parallel, makes it difficult for communication theorists to ignore the cultural dimension of communication technology and the political implications of media use.[3] In spite of the fact that the country's mosaic conception of culture is institutionalized in a bilingual national broadcasting system (CBC) and a bilingual press, book and film industry, writers and politicians have become increasingly aware that these two cultures rarely intersect. They instead constitute what Hugh McLennan calls "two solitudes".

The media portrayal of these two solitudes provides a unique opportunity for exploring in greater detail how English and French Canadians conceive of their alternative realities and what implications these conceptions have for theories of communications and political behavior. As communications analysts we need to understand how the meaning which actors attach to a situation evolves and whether Innis' and McLuhan's claims that the new media's spatial bias will tend toward homogenization of content can be substantiated. As citizens of a multi-cultural state we moreover need to know whether the differences in reality mapping, if they exist, do or do not erode the potential for Canadian political unity.

October 1970: "Front de Libération du Québec" (FLQ)

The FLQ crisis was chosen for an analysis of French and English reality mappings because crises have a number of advantages for symbolic analysis. During a crisis unimportant and irrelevant political details are filtered out and media attention is focused on the most fundamental political stances.[4] Furthermore, because crises are unexpected they provide more opportunity for individualism in news selection and projection of editorial attitudes than is ordinarily the case.[5] During a crisis routine interpretations break down and new definitions of events must be sought. Both of these factors operate to highlight differences in French/English news perspectives.

The FLQ crisis has been variously described as a "Time of Terrorists and Soldiers",[6] "War Declared on Québec",[7] and "Strong-Arm Rule in Canada".[8] All of these descriptions focus on the political aspects of the situation assuming that the crisis was uniformly perceived by everyone. In fact, this was not the case and therefore a variety of solutions to the conflict were proposed by federal and provincial, as well as English and French leaders and media. The crisis covered 59 days from Monday, October 5th when Mr. Cross, a British Trade Commissioner was kidnapped in front of his Montreal residence, to December 3, 1970 when he was finally released and his captors left for Cuba together with a number of other political prisoners and their families.

Within hours of the kidnapping the FLQ had sent a manifesto listing seven demands to radio station CKAC, which employed a sympathetic disc jockey. These included the release of 21 jailed members of the Front de Libération du Québec, $500,000 of gold and safe passage to Cuba or Algeria. The demands were rejected out of hand by Foreign Minister

Mitchell Sharp. Instead over 400 arrests of FLQ sympathizers were made in the following days. On Saturday, October 10, the Front struck again. This time, Pierre Laporte, Québec's Minister of Labour and Immigration was abducted and subsequently murdered. Premier Bourassa responded to this escalation by naming a governmental representative to negotiate the terms of release of both captives and by recognizing Robert Lemieux as the lawyer for the FLQ. The federal government however remained adamant against giving in to the ransom demands and on October 14, Ontario Premier Robarts offered the opinion that "We have to stand and fight...it's war".

Meanwhile, the pressure of Premier Bourassa to negotiate a full exchange mounted and 16 influential Québecers among them René Levesque (leader of the separatist Parti Québécois) and Claude Ryan (Publisher of Le Devoir) issued a statement criticizing Premier Robart's stance and urging the government to release the 23 convicted terrorists. A day later Premier Bourassa asked for armed forces to assure the safety of Montreal's people and buildings and on October 16, apparently with Bourassa's approval, the controversial War Measures Act was proclaimed by Parliament in Ottawa. It gave the government virtually unlimited power of search and seizure and led to the arrest of over 400 people, many of them French Canadian intellectuals, artists and teachers associated with the separatist movement. The end of the crisis came six weeks later on December 3rd, 1970 when Mr. Cross was released and his captors received safe conduct to Cuba.

French/English Coverage of the FLQ Crisis:
A Sketch of Alternative Realities

A number of findings in two studies permit us to systematically explore the alternative versions of reality which the French and English media created of the FLQ crisis. The first and more extensive study, content-analysed front and editorial page coverage of a representative, weighted national sample of 22 papers selected from Canada's total of 166 published in 1970.[9] It investigates stress, intensity and scope of the first seventeen days of crisis coverage (until Mr. Laporte's death) in terms of total space used, themes selected, geographic source of items and personalities mentioned in French and English papers. Papers were moreover divided by region and size to gain insight into the impact of geographical location and circulation on message flow and interpretation. A second study supplements the Siegal findings by analyzing only one topic, the War Measures Act coverage, in greater detail. Interviews and participant observation finally provided data on broadcast behavior throughout the crisis.

Let us begin with an analysis of the print media. What different aspects of reality did the French and English Canadian press select to feature and play during the October crisis? It was found that the 22 dailies in their 300 editions used the same total amount of space, indicating that both cultural groups interpreted events as a crisis and gave them constant front and editorial page coverage. Of the total 102,504 column inches, 33% were written by the regular staff, 28% were provided by the Canadian Press, 26% was devoted to pictures,

4% each to editorials and material from other news services like Southam, AFP, UPI, AP and Reuters, while 3% came from other sources and 2% constituted letters and cartoons. The disproportionately large input by newspaper staffs validates Klapper's prediction about the greater influence of journalists on interpretation during a crisis. Here however the similarities between French and English press coverage end.

The themes selected, geographic sources of items and personalities mentioned are quite different for the two groups. To find out what issues were discussed, all stories were classified under 32 themes. The theme labels indicate the main thrust of the story: Kidnapping, Manhunt, Security-Army, Parliament-Politics, Federal Government Position, Québec Government Position, Negotiations, War Measures Act, Civil Rights, Time, Murder, Legalistic, International Aspects, International Reaction-Personalities, International Press Reaction, Canadian Press Reaction, Canada Reaction-Personalities, Media, Local Intrusion, Background, Colour-Human Interest, Economic, Sports, Entertainment, Protest Movements, Historical, Communique, Obituary-Eulogy.[10]

Table 1 which summarizes the differences in themes receiving front page play in the French and English samples indicates that the two groups placed approximately equal emphasis on stories pertaining to Kidnapping and Security. Beyond that however the French dailies carried more front page stories on Negotiations, Religious-Funeral, the position of the Federal Government, the Québec Government and Time. The English papers on the other hand emphasized the Manhunt, the War Measures Act, Murder and Parliament.

The fact that the French and English papers stressed different aspects of the crisis, namely Negotiations covering stories urging a compromise approach to solving the crisis, versus Manhunt which dealt with police activities, indicates a disparate set of outlooks and values in the two press groups and explains the other variations of front page coverage. The most important precondition for negotiations, according to the French press, was the attitude of the authorities, the federal and provincial governments in Ottawa and Québec City. While these two themes ranked immediately after Negotiations in the French papers, they were not nearly as important in the English group. Furthermore the sense of time, so important in defining a crisis, indicates a French sense of urgency in bringing about negotiations, for otherwise the hostages would be killed.

For the English papers, in contrast, the most prominent theme Manhunt involving the police, was closely tied to Security and War Measures Act. Security dealt with the role of the army, as well as the emergency powers acquired through the War Measures Act which permitted the authorities to expand the manhunt and help uphold the principle of law and order. Consequently, Parliament, a theme not highlighted in the French press emerged on the English front pages. Parliament which was asked to approve the emergency act was of interest to the English press in its legislative capacity, while the French papers with their stress on the need for negotiations were significantly more interested in the executives, both federal and provincial.

**Table 1.**
**Category of Front Page Emphasis, by Coverage in French and English Papers** (in mean number of stories appearing daily on Page One)

| Theme | French Mean | English Mean | Percentage difference between means (Lower mean = 100% | Significance level in T test |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negotiations | .5185 | .4292 | French + 21% | .20* |
| Federal Government | .4568 | .2968 | French + 54% | .02 |
| Quebec Government | .4444 | .1598 | French + 178% | .000 |
| Manhunt | .4198 | .5388 | English + 28% | .20** |
| Kidnapping | .4074 | .4110 | Equal | - |
| Time | .3086 | .2237 | French + 38% | .15 |
| Security | .2963 | .3165 | English + 7% | - |
| Religious-Funeral | .2469 | .1416 | French + 74% | .05 |
| Parliament | .1728 | .3151 | English + 82% | .03 |
| Murder | .1111 | .2603 | English + 134% | .01 |
| War Measures Act | | | | |

* Significance level in F test, .01

** Significance level in F test, .02

N (F) = 81

N (E) = 219

Based on Siegel, **op.cit.** p. 76

Three additional French-English differences emerge and are based on an analysis of the mean number of mentions in over-all coverage. These were the International aspects of the crisis, the interest in Civil rights and the focus on Personalities. French papers wrote stories pertaining to international relations and interaction between Ottawa and other governments in Europe and the rest of the world, quoting both personalities and the foreign press two and five times as often as English papers.[11] If mentioned at all the English press focused on Canadian reactions and international relations only as far as the United States was involved.

In addition, there was in the French press far greater attention paid to the civil rights implications of the War Measures Act than in the English. Here the percentage differences in mean number of stories was French + 149%.[12] There was also a statistically significant difference in the names coming up in the heads of page one stories. The French press had double the interest in personalities based on the mean number of names appearing. Among these are Cross, Laporte, Lemieux (FLQ defense lawyer), Bourassa, Rose, Charbonneau and Chartrand (the kidnappers) and Drapeau (Montreal's mayor). In contrast, only Prime Minister Trudeau ranked high in frequency of mentions in English newspapers.

Yet another characteristic of the French press which illuminates differences in outlook and values is the emphasis on background stories explaining the ramifications of the FLQ crisis and related matters. These were virtually absent in the English press. These background stories according to Siegel, were often "think" pieces and intellectual journalism prepared by political scientists and others. One implication of this finding is that it indicates greater French media involvement in politics through interpretative pieces. This interpretation is further supported by the fact that the French media, especially Montreal's radio stations, CKAC and CKLM were active actors in the crisis, functioning as contact and distribution points for the FLQ communiques to the Québec public and government.

Since editorial attitudes on issues are closely related to front page coverage, Siegel's editorial findings may be used as a convenient summary of his results in the theme analysis. Table 2 clearly indicates that while all editorials stress terrorism and the FLQ, a ranking of other issues substantiates a French emphasis of the Québec and English preoccupation with the Federal Government. They rank 3rd and 6th place according to frequency of mention. Similar differences in ranking appear on the issue of Negotiations which are ranked 6th by the French minority while the English majority gives them 10th place. Canadian Unity and the War Measures Act are high on the interest agenda of the English press, ranking 8th and 5th respectively for English papers, rather than down the line in 9th and 12th place for the French.

We may summarize that French papers view the crisis from a Québec or French Canadian perspective stressing in their editorials how the October events affect life in the province. To avoid polarization of

**Table 2.**
**Editorial Evaluation on Specific Issues by Language** (frequency of indication of attitude and description of attitude in percentages)

| Issue | FRENCH Rank | Frequency (%) | Strongly Favourable (%) | Favourable (%) | Neutral (%) | Opposed (%) | Strongly Opposed (%) | Mean* Score | ENGLISH Rank | Frequency (%) | Strongly Favourable (%) | Favourable (%) | Neutral (%) | Opposed (%) | Strongly Opposed (%) | Mean* Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Terrorism | 1 | 85 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 23 | 66 | 4.54 | 1 | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 98 | 4.98 |
| F.L.Q. | 2 | 73 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 23 | 67 | 4.56 | 2 | 85 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 95 | 4.95 |
| Quebec Government | 3 | 66 | 30 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 4 | 2.48 | 6 | 53 | 56 | 29 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 1.63 |
| Federal Government | 3 | 66 | 11 | 30 | 30 | 26 | 4 | 2.81 | 3 | 76 | 59 | 27 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 1.63 |
| Mr. Cross | 5 | 51 | 48 | 43 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 1.62 | 4 | 55 | 67 | 26 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 1.43 |
| Mr. Laporte | 6 | 44 | 61 | 33 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1.44 | 7 | 41 | 65 | 27 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1.44 |
| Negotiations | 6 | 44 | 62 | 23 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 1.54 | 10 | 35 | 17 | 26 | 23 | 14 | 20 | 2.94 |
| Civil Rights | 8 | 37 | 40 | 13 | 27 | 13 | 7 | 2.33 | 9 | 36 | 11 | 17 | 33 | 28 | 11 | 3.11 |
| War Measures Act | 9 | 32 | 46 | 23 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 2.15 | 8 | 39 | 80 | 13 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1.28 |
| French Canadians | 10 | 29 | 75 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.25 | 12 | 21 | 14 | 38 | 33 | 10 | 5 | 2.72 |
| Social and Economic Injustices | 10 | 29 | 42 | 50 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1.67 | 14 | 12 | 17 | 67 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 2.17 |
| Canadian Unity | 12 | 24 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 2.30 | 5 | 54 | 95 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.02 |
| Separatism | 13 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 11 | 0 | 3.14 | 11 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 27 | 57 | 4.40 |
| Army | 14 | 10 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.50 | 13 | 14 | 93 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1.14 |
| New Democratic Party | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 14 | 12 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 92 | 0 | 3.83 |

N (F) = 81
N (E) = 219
* Mean score is theoretically not a valid figure. However, in practice it was found that the mean score was a fairly reliable indicator of overall editorial attitude.

Based on Siegel, Table 11, p. 93.

the two cultures, a negotiated settlement is proposed, the civil rights of the minority are stressed, separation as a politically viable stance is discounted and a historical perspective for the rise of terrorism is supplied. The English Canadian press on the other hand sees national unity at the heart of the crisis. To maintain this unity it proposes to hit the terrorists with all available power, including the police and the army. There is consequently little concern for civil rights. Instead there is worry about the immediate economic repercussions of the crisis for Canada, the cost of the police and the fluctuating actions of the stock market.

Two other but lesser findings emerge from the Siegel study which have implications for the way in which national identity is interpreted by the two cultures. The first indicates that there is a great homogeneity in crisis coverage in the French press, which is not evident in English papers. The evaluation of front page themes, the news theme content, geographical source of stories, emphasis on personalities as well as editorial position are the same in all six French papers. Only the space profiles on these papers differ.[13] The great disparity of English crisis coverage on the other hand precluded the emergence of regional patterns, in spite of the regional ownership patterns of the Canadian press.

Instead it appears that an English paper's size and its distance from the crisis were most important in determining English coverage. Consequently the large circulation Montreal (Star and Gazette) and Toronto papers (Globe and Mail and Daily Star) tended to have more coverage and greater similarity in outlook than medium sized and small papers in the Atlantic, Prairie and British Columbia regions far removed from the crisis center. Small papers, as a group, were moreover much less conciliatory, taking what may loosely be called a "hard line". They were generally opposed to negotiations, strongly supportive of the army and in favor of the War Measures Act and Prime Minister Trudeau's refusal to meet the demands of the kidnappers.

The author's own content study based on topic analysis of the War Measures Act coverage in six regionally selected French and English papers, supplements and amplifies the Siegel findings. Here it is noted that Act coverage included seven topics: justifications, discussions of suspension of rights, federal versus provincial initiative, its relation to separatism, group reactions including international comments and evaluations of performance.

Table 3 corroborates that the War Measures Act as a category was one of the main topics of crisis coverage. It received from between one quarter to over one third of all references in all papers. The highest attention scores based on percentages of references were found in the Gazette and Le Devoir (both of Montreal) but for quite opposite reasons. The French papers focused their primary attention on the shaky nature of the act's justifications as well as its infringement of civil liberties. La Presse the mass circulation daily opts for the former, while the intellectual Le Devoir stresses suspension of rights in 164

**Table 3**
**Ranking of "War Measures" Topics**
**in Six Newspapers**

| Topics | Gazette | | Le Devoir | | La Presse | | Globe | | W.F. Press | | Sun | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Att. | Em | Att. | Em | Att. | Em | Att. | Em | Att. | Em | Att. | Em |
| 1 Justifications (Expediency) | 4<br>Rank: 2 | 8<br>1 | 9<br>2 | 10<br>3 | 10<br>1 | 8<br>1 | 5<br>3 | 6<br>3 | 10<br>1 | 12<br>1 | 8<br>2 | 7<br>2 |
| 2 Suspension of Rights | 1<br>Rank: 5 | 8<br>2 | 16<br>1 | 11<br>2 | 9<br>2 | 4<br>3 | 9<br>2 | 8<br>2 | 10<br>1 | 11<br>3 | 3<br>4 | 3<br>4 |
| 3 Federal and Provincial | 2<br>Rank: 4 | 3<br>4 | 4<br>4 | 7<br>5 | 1<br>5 | 1<br>5 | 3<br>4 | 1<br>4 | 1<br>5 | 1<br>6 | 2<br>5 | 2<br>5 |
| 4 Group Perceptions | 31<br>Rank: 1 | 3<br>3 | 7<br>3 | 18<br>1 | 6<br>3 | 5<br>2 | 18<br>1 | 29<br>1 | 9<br>2 | 8<br>2 | 10<br>1 | 8<br>1 |
| 5 Stop Separatism | 2<br>Rank: 3 | 3<br>4 | 2<br>6 | 4<br>4 | 1<br>6 | 0<br>7 | 7<br>5 | 0<br>6 | 1<br>4 | 1<br>5 | 1<br>6 | 1<br>6 |
| 6 Evaluation of WMA | 0<br>Rank: 0 | 1<br>5 | 2<br>5 | 1<br>6 | 3<br>4 | 1<br>4 | 0<br>7 | 0<br>7 | 0<br>6 | 0<br>5 | 0<br>7 | 0<br>5 |
| 7 Other | 0<br>Rank: 6 | 0<br>6 | 0<br>7 | 0<br>7 | 0<br>7 | 1<br>6 | 0<br>6 | 1<br>5 | 1<br>3 | 2<br>4 | 3<br>3 | 4<br>3 |
| Totals Attention and Emphasis (in percent) | 40 | 26 | 40 | 46 | 29 | 20 | 35 | 44 | 31 | 36 | 25 | 25 |

Attention = % of all references to topic in sample

Emphasis = % topics given headline or main point stress

out of its 40% references to the act. Both agree that it is a governmental overreaction to the situation.

The English papers, in contrast, tend to highlight group perceptions (Montreal Gazette, Toronto Globe and Mail and Vancouver Sun) noting that political parties, teachers and students and public opinion generally are more concerned with the Act's role in safeguarding political unity. As expected, the French papers never confused the FLQ kidnappings with the Parti Québécois political separation drive and therefore considered the War Measures Act ineffective in dealing with the separatism issue. This topic consequently ranks last in over-all attention and emphasis in both La Presse and Le Devoir.

True to the Siegel findings, the English papers except for the Gazette, as a group, make the least mention of the sub-topic of evaluation, but show no further consistent stress of line of argument. The diversified interpretations of the English press is furthermore evident from the fact that "other" arguments and evaluations ranked third in attention in papers outside of Québec and Ontario.

## The Political Implications of Alternative Mappings of the FLQ Crisis in Multi-National Canada

Numerous studies have indicated that the media's alternative mappings of reality may have a distruptive impact on the political processes of multi-national states.[16] In certain instances it seems a country's media may foster and reinforce disintegrative political tendencies by popularizing and serving as a rallying point for political groups threatening the very foundations of national unity. Innis claims that consequently governments in all societies keep a close watch over their information monopolies, especially if these are challenged during a crisis.

Since the press in Canada is privately owned it was not as readily accessible to governmental influence during the FLQ crisis. But the broadcast media were another matter. Here the government had a potentially greater control for two reasons; first, the director of the public broadcasting system (CBC) is governmentally appointed and, second, the electronic system is much more centralized, functioning in three loosely integrated networks. Interviews and participant observation reveal that the CBC's Davidson was taken into the government's confidence prior to the imposition of the War Measures Act and that his authority over the broadcasting corporation was utilized to support and implement governmental censorship over information.

According to the War Measures Act, section 3, during war, invasion or insurrection "the powers of the Governor in Council shall extend to all matters coming within the classes of subjects hereinafter enumerated....(a) Censorship and the control and suppression of publications, writings, maps, plans, photographs, communications and means of communication".[17] The Act furthermore provides for arrests, detention and deportation without warrant, control of harbors, ports and terri-

torial waters, transportation, trading and expropriation. Two questions require clarification. First, what was the effect of these wide-ranging powers on the operation and content of the Canadian public and private broadcast sectors during the crisis period? And second, how did they counterbalance the deviant points of view expressed in the French press?

Interviews with program personnel and the broadcast logs of Hourglass and CFCF TV indicate that there were at least three effects of censorship.[18] The War Measures Act was directly responsible for getting rid of a number of potentially inflammable specials, increasing top and middle management involvement in public affairs programming and reinforcing the "self censorship" practices of broadcast personnel. All of these factors together changed news coverage formats in both the CBC and private broadcasting and made public affairs coverage during the October crisis more neutral, factual and homogenized. Broadcasters consequently functioned as transmitters rather than interpreters of an important series of events and thus counter-balanced the widely varying assessments of the crisis appearing in Canada's French and English press.

The elimination of "potentially inflammable" programming in both public and private broadcasting emerged from a number of interviews. The CBC's Director of Information Programming in Toronto rescheduled the October 13th documentary on Lenin and the Russian Revolution twice, showing it finally on December 18th, five days after Mr. Cross' release. The Act also first advanced and then postponed till January 1971 the documentary on "Separatism" written and directed by Hourglass host Peter Desbarats. Private stations too felt the Act's power. Here a two part sequence of Ironside dealing with a fictional revolutionary working out of Montreal got the axe. More serious however, the October 28 French CBC Cent Mille Chansons was not aired, because Pauline Julien the popular singer with separatist leanings was in jail.[19]

Another way in which censorship manifested itself was through increased top and middle management involvement in news programming. This switch encouraged a contextless presentation of facts virtually eliminating interpretation so important to an understanding of the crisis. Increased upper management involvement in programming is a well-known and documented phenomenon during political crisis.[20] In both the CBC and CTV Montreal stations there was a change in daily public affairs decision-making patterns. To reduce uncertainty, higher management levels not usually involved took an active part in program selection during the October crisis.

Interviews indicate that it all started with the Toronto Director of Information Programming, who does not usually concern himself with daily content in Montreal and Ottawa, calling off all public affairs shows on the night of October 15th, one day before the War Measures Act was instituted. Because this order generated strong resistance among Montreal journalists, it was ultimately rescinded, though not before creating havoc. Peter Desbarats of the nightly Montreal

Hourglass remembers: "We were told that a CBC directive from Toronto would prevent us from discussing the FLQ kidnappings (live) on the show. We quickly patched together another line-up from items on film and tape, but received word to go ahead with the students from McGill five minutes before air time".[21]

After the WMA proclamation the CBC head office furthermore continued to remain involved by quashing all "man on the street" segments and "citizen panels" on Hourglass. It also called daily for over four weeks inquiring about the show's nightly content and encouraged Kay McIver, the then Montreal public affairs supervisor to be more vigilant. Interviews indicate that she consequently sat in on all programme meetings, a practice followed as well by the news director and station manager of CFCF who usually do not participate in program formulation. In the more sensitive French network, moreover, all public affairs shows were required to be taped and middle management previewed both the daily Format 30 and the weekly Format 60.

Restricted news sources throughout the crisis further "sanitized" coverage with much reporting based on short bulletins supplied by the police. Since it was a local event, CP copy was largely irrelevant and on the spot coverage was hindered by FLQ secrecy and police operations. Consequently, coverage in all broadcast stations was reduced to the retelling of past events and concentration on hostage backgrounds and the history of the FLQ. Only when Mr. Cross was found at the end of the crisis, was live coverage possible. To cope with these realities, informants noted that CFCF made its reporters into topic specialists and channeled them into specific areas, instead of assigning them randomly to stories during the crisis.

Increased self-awareness and the imposition of self-censorship on the part of news personnel throughout the crisis was a third result of the uncertain October situation. The War Measures Act, as we saw, specifically condoned censorship and the control and suppression of communications. But what did that mean in practice? Neither the CBC head office in Toronto nor private network lawyers it seems, issued memoranda to their staffs clarifying the Act's implications. Doubtlessly, the reason for this inaction was the fact that the Act is so broadly phrased that it is difficult to interpret. As a result CBC's President George Davidson midway through the crisis merely told reporters that he expected news personnel to be guided by a "policy of restraint" and to refrain from remarks feeding the tense atmosphere in Montreal. The specifics of this "restraint" were however never spelled out, though the English programming Vice-President did circulate a memorandum urging the greatest caution.

Interviews revealed that journalists generally erred on the side of over-caution as Desbarats' diary statement for October 16 shows. Here he notes: "For the first time since I became a journalist I am working under a rigid set of directives. Internal policy within the CBC today, at least as far as we understand it, is that we explain the War Measures Act, which the government put into effect early this morning, but we

are not allowed to discuss its political implications. But at least we can still go on the air live".[22] But even for Hourglass, as we have seen, citizen panels and "man in the street" commentary were prohibited.

Self-censorship was moreover reinforced by arrests of journalists and individuals with known liberal or separatists tendencies. Many stations had colleagues visited by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. One Hourglass editor-researcher and producer of the NDP's Last Post was detained for three days. The resulting over-conservatism reflected itself in CBC top management attempts to eliminate all live broadcasting. The evidence shows that this was accomplished in Radio Canada's French programming on the grounds that it had been too emotional at the onset of the crisis. The English network however did not submit to these demands and consequently Montreal's English-speaking viewers watched the discovery of Laporte's body live, while French Canadians were treated to a running commentary against a backdrop of still pictures.

Over-caution also affected private station managements like radio CJAD. Here Rod Dewar, popular host of the morning show was dropped after fifteen years of employment for commenting on the War Measures Act. The reason given once again was that criticism of the government could be construed as indirect support for the outlawed FLQ and was therefore illegal. The resulting changes in news formats and the way in which events were covered during the October crisis is amply demonstrated by the program logs of Hourglass and CFCF.

Table 4 the Hourglass Log indicates that there was very little crisis coverage in the first week, when Mr. Cross was kidnapped. This changed drastically with the abduction of Labor Minister Laporte on Sunday, October 11. During the second week, four of the five shows were entirely devoted to the crisis, coverage falling off once again after the imposition of the War Measures Act, October 16. The latter virtually inhibited mention of the crisis, in spite of Laporte's murder on Sunday, October 18 and his state funeral two days later. It is also noticeable that the third week featured no citizen responses to the crisis, though these had been the mainstay of peak week news coverage.

Two cross pressures on the staff, arising from the undefined nature of self-restraint and a journalist's professionally inculcated desire not to omit items, explain journalistic behavior during the October crisis. First, it led to a highly personal resolution of conflicts for each staff member and, second, it generally encouraged factual recounting of events and non-analytical coverage. Interviews and program analysis indicate that the broadcast media opted to side with the government, voluntarily abdicating their right to criticism. News analyses were replaced by the use of two-minute news bulletins and CBC as well as the private broadcast networks extended their regular newscasts to accommodate increased coverage. CBC's Weekend did no more than recap the facts, while CTV innovated Insight News which broadcast at odd hours and for different amounts of time without interpretation.

Table 4

CBC "Hourglass" Log Book Entries

(One Hour Daily Current Events Show)
"Nothing" refers to nothing on crisis

| Week I | Date: | Item: |
|---|---|---|
| | Oct. 5 | nothing |
| | Oct. 6 | editorial on kidnapping (1 item) |
| | Oct. 7 | nothing |
| | Oct. 8 | Robert Lemieux Press Conference (1 item) |
| | Oct. 9 | nothing |

| Week II | Date: | Item: |
|---|---|---|
| | Oct. 12 | Panel of Citizens: Paul Doncet and Phil Cutler recreating conversations heard all over Montreal, Live, FULL SHOW |
| | Oct. 13 | Panel of Citizens: (same group) Live, FULL SHOW |
| | Oct. 14 | nothing |
| | Oct. 15 | McGill students and Sociology Professor discussing English views of the crisis Live, FULL SHOW |
| | Oct. 16 | Two lawyers discussing the War Measures Act Live, FULL SHOW |

| Week III | Date: | Item: |
|---|---|---|
| | Oct. 19 | Professor on War Measures Act (1 item) Reaction to Laporte's Death (1 item) |
| | Oct. 20 | nothing |
| | Oct. 21 | Interview with Rod Dewar just fired from radio CJAD (1 item) |
| | Oct. 22 | Drapeau interview questioning Marchand's claim that FRAP is a front for the outlawed FLQ |
| | Oct. 23 | "Man in the street" on Municipal Elections journalists on same topic FULL SHOW |

Table 4. (Continued)

Also of Interest:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oct. 26 | Desbarats' interview with the BBC London World Tonight |
| Nov. 3 | Discussion of the role of private radio during the crisis |
| Nov. 4 | Lawyer on the Public Order Act |
| Nov. 13 | Pauline Julien on "Two Solitudes" |
| Dec. 3 | Resumé of events since October 5, 1970 |
| Dec. 4 | Gaston Thérrien on Lanctot and Charbonneau in Cuba |

On October 26, two weeks after Cross' kidnapping, the British BBC asked for an interview with Desbarats for World Tonight. The discussion included surmises about Mr. Cross' well-being and finally an inquiry whether events in recent weeks will lead to an increase of extremism in Québec. Desbarats notes in his diary: "This is a question I can't answer now. The government has achieved its short-term objectives, I tell the interviewer in London. The terrorists are frightened and the majority of Canadians in Québec and elsewhere are solidly behind the government's show of force. But in the long run? More than a hundred of the people who were detained by the police are now out of prison and spreading stories about the apparent futility of the police action. People are demanding to know more about the "apprehended insurrection" which so disrupted the normal political life of the country".[23] Whether a crisis really existed and the War Measures Act was justified remains a hotly contested issue in Canada today.[24] The Act expired May 1, 1971 and by August the criminal charges against 35 individuals who were accused of aiding and abetting the FLQ were also dropped because a majority of the accused were acquitted by local juries.[25]

In summary it may be noted that the expurgation of potentially inflammable programme content, increased management involvement in program planning and the operation of journalistic self-censorship which prohibited interpretation, all added up to homogenizing and neutralizing broadcast content. Journalists could justify their abrogation of a critical stance by falling back on the professional criterion of "objectivity" and "factual" reporting. Broadcast institutions, especially the CBC with its governmentally appointed top management, saw the uncritical submission of their network to political leaders as the proper thing to do in a time of crisis. Their submission to authority set the tone for private stations which followed the CBC lead. Only middle and lower-echelon personnel in Ottawa and Montreal cautioned against the possibly dangerous precedent and effects of overt news screening in a democratic country like Canada.

## Conclusions: Theoretical and Political

What kinds of conclusions can be drawn from the assembled material? Three seem to be most notable. First, there is the realization that a theory of human communication must account for the way in which actors' assessments of situations affect behavior. This suggests that the public stock of symbols available to people to attach to selected aspects of reality make a great difference to the way in which they "see" their world. Second, it appears that Innis' prediction that the spatial bias of the electronic media make them more susceptible to centralized manipulation and therefore to a homogenization of outlooks, is partially substantiated. Finally, it turns out that there may be different degrees of monopolies of knowledge and power enjoyed by different information technologies.

A number of scholars from Burke[26] to Berger and Luckmann[27] have pointed out that our conception of reality is socially constructed from a stock

of significant symbols. This implies that we learn about ourselves and the world from those with whom we live and work and that what we call "reality" is not something external or separate, but made up of selected aspects which we learn to pay attention to. If this is so, Innis suggests the technology distributing these symbols will also have cultural implications. By this he means that the media network through which we communicate, affects the structure of the things we think about. It also helps supply the symbols with which we think as well as the arena in which our thoughts occur.

The French and English press coverage indicated that this is indeed the case and that there was furthermore a great difference between the two coverages. If we break these down into their component parts, we find that the two discussion agendas juxtaposed the themes of Negotiation, Québec Government, Civil Rights and Time in the French press with Manhunt, War Measures Act, Murder and Parliament in the English papers. The symbols emerging from these competing themes had to do with compromise on the part of minority and with law and order on the part of majority Canadians. The arena in which thought occurs was defined by the French press as the province of Québec. This resulted in a strongly local coverage and perspective. The English papers serving three-fourths of the Canadian population spread over nine provinces on the other hand defined the thought arena in national terms and perceived the crisis primarily as a threat to national unity. Beyond that however there was no consensus in the English press about how to differentiate between the Parti Québécois separatist aims and those of the kidnappers or how to understand the province's call for greater economic and cultural autonomy.

For a theory of human communication these findings suggest that people's communicative behavior cannot be explained in purely cybernetic terms. Such an approach, as Deutsch stresses, is most valuable for an analysis of the goal orientations and control aspects of human communication.[28] It is inadequate in explaining the process by which shared meanings emerge, what forms exchange may take and how influence works. Cybernetics and systems theories, because they assume that the status and social condition of senders and receivers are fixed, substitute "significance" for "meaning". "Meaning" as we have seen does not however reside in information transfer, but in the minds of the people engaged in the transaction. Human exchanges furthermore cannot be fully explained by citing network characteristics and efficiency criteria, because humans are surrounded by both a physical and a communicational environment. What each of us selects and pays attention to in this environment is of crucial importance to an understanding of how we behave.

The assembled data on Canadian broadcast behavior during the crisis furthermore substantiate Innis' prediction that the electronic media may contribute to a more homogenized outlook because their organization tends to centralize authority and shifts it to more distant places. These hubs in turn are more open to manipulation from other power sources. The CBC data clearly indicate that the CBC was consulted by

the government and that increased top echelon involvement in programming reduced content and interpretative variety. To recapitulate: Certain kinds of documentary as well as fictional episodes and the utilization of interviews with the public were eliminated from both the French and English news coverage. Interpretative variety was reduced by Toronto's supervision of Montreal and Ottawa public affairs broadcasts as well as by journalistic self-censorship which was condoned and encouraged by the CBC organization. Finally, restricted news sources and a reliance on police material further "sanitized" interpretation. These three factors taken together tended to make public affairs broadcasting of the October crisis in radio and television more neutral, factual and homogenized than it would have been under ordinary conditions.

As to the political implications of monopolies of knowledge and power supported by different information technologies, the study suggests that print in Canada was better able to protect its monopoly of knowledge and varying definition of reality than broadcasting. Whether this is a universal phenomenon is a question not answerable from the present material. Three reasons account for this difference in Canada. First, the fact that there are 116 newspapers privately owned by approximately ten chains, compared with Canada's three electronic networks.[29] The latter are regionally organized, owing to the country's small population unevenly distributed across a large territory. Only local papers can obtain sufficient advertising revenue for survival in such a setting. Furthermore, the press employs nearly 3,000 journalists, perhaps three times the number of production personnel in broadcasting. Many of these are located in and around the Québec-Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto axis according to the Siegel study. They had a disproportionate influence on the October coverage because of the nature of the crisis and because the national news agency CP was further from the scene.

In spite of greater press than broadcast autonomy over its monopoly of knowledge there were, however, according to the Siegel study, indirect pressures at work even here to unify political interpretations across Canada. Two of these are most interesting. During the crucial period there was an ongoing editorial dialog between the major papers in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver and furthermore many of the major reporters and editorial writers knew and communicated with each other throughout the crisis.[30] Editorials appearing in Le Devoir were read and commented on in the Toronto Globe and Mail and often the Vancouver Sun echoed opinions from the Montreal Gazette. As a result all large papers with the widest circulation, both French and English, were concerned about the civil rights infringements of the War Measures Act, as well as with the need to distinguish between the aims of the terrorist Front du Libération du Québec and the legal Parti Québécois. The large circulation papers like the broadcast media thus served not only to establish a unified framework for Canada's political discussion agenda, but to reestablish a balance between French and English views which would serve as a future base for political consensus.

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2. See article by James Carey "Canadian Communication Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis" in this issue.

3. See Frank Peer's article in this issue for details of early broadcast history.

4. Robert C. North et.al., Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963)

5. J.T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960) p. 53-61

6. No author, "A Time of Terrorists and Soldiers", Saturday Night, Vol. 85, no. 12, (December 1970) front page

7. Staff, "War Declared on Quebec", Canadian Dimension, vol. 7, nos. 5/6, (December 1970) p. 4-18

8. Roger Neville Williams, "The War Measures Act and Its Aftermath, Strong-Arm Rule in Canada", New Republic, (January 30, 1970) p. 15-18

9. Arthur Siegel, Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the FLQ Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, August 1974. p. 31-41

10. For further definition of these categories, see Siegel Appendix C, p. 271-274

11. Ibid. p. 90. The French and English means were .5432 to .2694 percentage differences (French + 102%) and 1.0370 to .2785 percentage differences (French + 272%) respectively.

12. Ibid., p. 83

13. Ibid., p. 155, 218-220

14. This content analysis utilized a method called "topic analysis" which permits one to focus on subject areas of special interest. (see: George Gerbner, "World Press Study", Appendix II D, p. 1-3) An item in this analysis is any piece of content referring to the crisis. A topic refers to a subject explicitly noted or discussed in an item. A reference is one or more passages noting a single topic in an item. A topic group is a

References: (continued)

general subject area representing a number of topics. Attention refers to the frequency of references to topics or topic groups. Relative attention is expressed as the percent of all references to a topic in the sample. Emphasis is indicated by what topics or topic groups are given headline or "main point" stress in articles, editorials or opinion items.

15. Each of these topics contained at least three types of arguments. For justifications these included: save democratic processes, others do it too, and criminal law is insufficient. For suspension there were: this is a witch hunt, an overreaction, entails selective suspension of rights. The federal-provincial topic noted: Bourassa asked for federal aid, federal government took over, both governments act in harmony. Group reactions included: arguments from teachers and students, political parties, labor union and public opinion both domestic and foreign. The evaluation topic finally noted the state of political uncertainty, leakage of capital, social disorder and the bad international image being generated by the War Measure's Act.

16. Gertrude Joch Robinson, "The Mass Media and Ethnic Strife: Testing a Hypothesis in Multinational Yugoslavia", Journalism Quarterly, 51, no. 3 (Autumn, 1974) p. 490-497

17. Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1927), chapter 206, p. 4085

18. Interviews were obtained from three CBC Hourglass researcher-editors, two public affairs producers, the director of Public Affairs, Toronto, and the assistant director of local Radio News, Montreal. Further interviews in March 1971 by a number of McGill students covered the manager and news director of the private CFCF station.

19. Ron Hoggard and Aubrey Golden, "War Measures: Pauline and Gerald and Henri and Michel and the Night Canada Threw them in Jail", MacLeans Magazine, vol. 84, no. 2 (February 1971) p. 21-25

20. Gertrude Joch Robinson, "Foreign News Selection is Non-Linear in Yugoslavia's Tanjug Agency", Journalism Quarterly, 47. no. 2 (Summer 1970) p. 340-57

21. Peter Desbarats, "In our Weeks of Anguish", Saturday Night, vol. 85, no. 12, (December 1970) p. 22

22. Ibid., p. 22

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29. Keith Davey, Canada, Royal Commission Report on the Mass Media (Davey) Vol. I, (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1970)

30. Siegel, op. cit. p. 200

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# Raven: "Intermediate" Communications Technology and Rural Isolation

> We are convinced that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours...Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges: they were instructed in all your science; but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods...totally good for nothing. We are however, ...obliged by your kind offer, and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.
>
> An Indian Chief in reply to an offer to educate Indian youth, Ben Franklin, 1794

In 1967, when we got involved in the design of RAVEN (Radio and Visual Educational Network) to serve the communications needs of the isolated Indian communities of the B.C. coast, few people had heard of portable videotape recorders and single sideband radios. Now community access groups and video conferences proliferate, and much has been written and related about the RAVEN project. Little of it has touched on its essential characteristics however.[1] It is not so much the technology used that matters, although that is what makes any system possible at any given moment. It is the choice of a particular technology and its method of application in the light of the needs of a particular social group that is central in such a design. This is the kind of analysis and synthesis that has continued to occupy us as we have looked at actual or potential communications systems in varying cultural contexts.

The opening quote seems appropriate to us because inadvertently or not, communications systems almost invariably trespass into the field of education, at least into adult non-formal education, as UNESCO refers to it currently. The quotation is also singularly appropriate for highlighting the cultural divergencies that continue to be underestimated not just in dealing with native people on this continent, but by the planners of the western world in the design and execution of systems for the developing nations.[2] Scientists and engineers have perfected the technology of mass communications and the techniques for transmitting messages from a limited number of origination points to a mass audience. As we share these technologies and techniques with people of other nations and other cultures, we contribute greater effi-

ciency - whatever our intentions or stated goals - to the process of world cultural homogenization. Assuming that this is not a deliberate and/or desirable goal, we postulate that it is an avoidable outcome - if we look carefully at our choice of technologies in the light of cultural parameters and clarify the tasks for which the system is to be inaugurated.

RAVEN is one example of a system deliberately using simpler technologies than those of mass broadcasting because of the job that needed to be done and because of the cultural and social patternings of the people who would be using the network. The principles applicable to the design of the RAVEN system are, we believe, applicable to the design of networks in other cultural contexts and may yield widely different network structures.

To develop these ideas it is necessary first to have a brief look at the cultural context of this system design: the B.C. coastal Indian communities. Nearly half of the 40,000 Indians of British Columbia live in the coastal area, scattered over approximately 800 small reserves comprising 81 independent units called "bands", an average of little more than 200 Indians per band.[3] The differences dividing the groups are of long standing. Within one of the six major linguistic divisions as identified by anthropologists, even neighboring bands differ in dialect and cultural traits and not infrequently have a history of mutual hostility.[4]

In the past twenty years steps had been taken toward cooperation by the Indians in groups such as the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and its splinter organization, the North American Indian Brotherhood. More recent events had seen the rise of two Inter-Tribal Indian Federations on Vancouver Island and the unification of five northern bands into the Nishga Tribal Council. Communications and cooperation between these larger groups, however, remained short of that needed to be effective in today's conditions.[5]

The problems confronting the Indian people that required coordination of efforts, experience and resources included the protracted struggle over land claims. Indian rights to the lands of British Columbia had never been formally extinguished by treaty; consequently, the question remains open but will require the presentation of elaborate legal briefs and historical documentation. Progress had been slow and sporadic. As one Chief commented, "Many of the Indian people simply do not understand the political and legal complexities of the Land Question".

Similarly, the Indian Affairs Branch had called upon Canadian Indians to participate in discussions concerning the revision of the Indian Act, the federal legislation which dictates in detail the rights and duties of legally recognized Indians. But as one spokesman observed, "Most of our people never understood the first one". Underscored, in both instances - land claims and the revision of the Indian Act - was the need for better communication - for access to the information and

understanding Indian groups needed to make decisions.

In addition, Indians were expressing the need for day to day kind of information - about the best type of roofing materials for coastal housing, about how to deal with loggers encroaching on reserve land; and they wanted to learn from other bands how they had handled similar problems or what their experience had been. They were asking in effect for a revolution in the communications structures they had had for nearly a century. It was the classical hub pattern in which the Indian Affairs Bureau and the regional superintendent remained at the center, yet what was needed was greater communication between bands.

Most information came to the regional superintendent and only through him, to the bands. The bands all communicated with the Agent, and he redistributed information as he thought best. And since the Agency controlled travel funds, the Agent or his representative communicated with each of the bands. Bands did not communicate regularly with one another, but were coming to recognize, under the force of outside pressure, their need to do so, in spite of whatever remained of long time animosities.

They were shifting as well from a long term position of dependency on Indian Affairs agents to one of greater independence. Animosity now directed against the Agency provided the classic impetus for Bands to cooperate together against the outside enemy. But cooperation and communications continued to be thwarted by the geography that had bred such disparate groupings in the first place. Travel by air or sea becomes difficult, unpleasant and in some places, impossible through long winter months; telephone service was non-existent, unreliable or expensive. Mail is too slow and unsuitable anyway for a semi-literate population with strong oral traditions.

As the Federal Government Task Force on Information was to put it a year later:

> Clearly, the first need is for information, Indian people must know what are their opportunities, their rights. This is not an easy need to meet. Schools, pamphlets and their educational efforts have failed miserably as statistics will show. The problems, rules and programs are usually so complex that their use can be explained only through test cases carefully studied. Indian people on the edge of subsistence do not have the resources to experiment with the meanings of words and bureaucratic forms.[6]

The red, blue, yellow, pink circulars of the Indian Affairs Agency were a familiar joke - filed carefully on the reserves - as toilet paper in village facilities. The native people complained that they were never told anything; and the Indian agents replied in exasperation that a circular had been sent.

The essential need was then for a communications system in a form suitable for the people who would use it and that would facilitate

communications between groups not now having easy access to one another. Clearly the system should not be a centralized broadcast system, one that would too easily recreate the hub communications model, replacing the Indian agent with an Indian Super Chief. It would have to provide information when somebody wanted to know it; so it would have to be a two-way interactive system providing instant feedback - not a structured one-way broadcast operation.

It would have to be as culture-free as possible. This meant two things:

1) It could not be print because the population was semi-literate, with a strong oral tradition.
2) It had to be simple to operate, so that it did not require oversight by specialists from the dominant culture or require native people to submit to lengthy training in the institutions of that culture.

It should furthermore be as decentralized as possible, giving none of the rival tribal or language groups control or dominance over the system. Some resource and operational centre would be required by any technology but it should be minimal, functioning more as a switching centre than as a central broadcast headquarters. To form the backbone of the RAVEN system, we chose single sideband radio. Any village on the RAVEN system can originate a message, and given the right climatic conditions, every other village can hear it directly or get it relayed through the central switching centre. The same can be true of half-inch videotapes that could be made in any village and "bicycled" (transported) to the others.

Finally, the system should be native, not only in operation and control, but in its exclusivity. The native people should not be expected to share the air waves with logging and/or shipping operations, uncertain at all times as to who might be listening to what concerned only themselves. So we applied for - and RAVEN eventually got - private operating frequencies. No one else receives or transmits on them without permission from the RAVEN society and a license from the federal Department of Communications.

Some people have said that the radio network wouldn't have been necessary had the telephone system adequately served the province. This is only partly true. Radio provides a "community of the air" that only the old small town party-line telephone can approach. A system where everyone can hear everyone else's conversation, and everyone knows that everyone else can hear it, creates a communications space that is significantly different and better suited to this context than is the private space of the urban telephone connection.

The idea is that from the central headquarters on one of the reserves on the coast, information can be passed rapidly and efficiently to people in the outlying villages, many of which up to this time had not

even a radio telephone for emergencies. They can be given by those Indians who have had greater opportunity to learn the information that they need in order to make some of the decisions they are being called upon to make. They can learn of the real prospects awaiting an Indian in the city who finishes his education; they can hear of the medical and health facilities available once they know how to get access to them. In addition they can discuss all this information between communities, talking from village to village about matters of mutual concern. They can exchange information about what Indian people of different cultures are doing across the continent to preserve their heritage and at the same time to take advantage of the ongoing economic activity that surrounds them in twentieth-century North America. They can get more immediate attention from government departments and other bodies for the settlement of their grievances. They can find out which form in what department is appropriate to handle a current problem; they can give their reactions to the decisions of the Minister of Indian Affairs about health care matters, or educational improvisations. Many communities will no doubt be listeners for long periods of time, but the potential and the ability to make their voices heard will be there.

Some movements of information, particularly when they are more complex and more directly educational require a visual component. RAVEN has chosen the half-inch videotape recorder as its means of visual communications. These are very simple, easy-to-operate pieces of equipment that enable each community to produce its own television programs, to ship the tapes it has made and to play back tapes that may be sent to it, either from the control center or from other communities. It is a means for them to see at first hand the ministers and officials who are making decisions about their lives, to determine not only by words but by tone of voice and facial expression what their opinion about new policies and legislation will be. They in turn, can make tapes and have these shipped to the capital in Ottawa, some three thousand miles away, to present their cases first-hand to the people who have the power to change the situation.

Whether RAVEN has or ever will exploit all the potential for educational and informational exchange that lies within the design is a question for analysis and perhaps debate in the future. What seems indisputable is that technically and perhaps psychologically, there has been no stopping the spread of the network and the idea. By the end of 1973 there were nearly 100 stations licensed and/or in operation not only in British Columbia but in the Yukon and Northwest Territories as well. As Senator Guy Williams, Chairman of the RAVEN Society put it, "some of those communities -- particularly on the west coast of Vancouver Island -- just could not survive any longer without RAVEN". Whatever other analytical or experimental tests the design may be subject to, it seems to have passed a basic experimental test: it's working.

RAVEN as we have seen was designed to meet the needs of people living in a rural area, who needed information both from outside their

cultural group and from one another in order to make the necessary adaptations, that paradoxically would allow them to preserve their way of life. Key factors in the design were that:

1) Indian groups controlled it themselves and therefore could make the system suit their own needs and their own cultural style.
2) It was interactive, with capacity for rapid if not instant feedback and the ability of participants to learn what they wanted to know, when they wanted to know it.
3) It was as far as possible decentralized so that all points on the network could speak to and hear all of the other points, not just be passive recipients of packaged information from a central source.

Such a social situation is not uncommon among large numbers of rural-dwelling people throughout the world, and we must therefore raise the question whether the RAVEN system is applicable elsewhere. Can it be adapted to the needs of developing countries for raising the level of information/education?[7] Historically such systems have been centralized rather than decentralized. Witness the impact of The Farm Radio Forum pioneered years ago by the CBC in Canada and transported elsewhere. Basically this is a one-way radio broadcast system in which programs considered to be of interest to agricultural or otherwise occupied rural people are sent out from a central program origination headquarters.[8]

In Togo in West Africa, for example, attempts are made to get some feedback from the program recipients. The station provides forms to the local animator and requests written responses through him from the participants in discussions.[9] The complaints about the system from the point of view of those operating it are predictable. Mail is of course slow so that feedback comes more than one week after a program has been broadcast. Any request for further information can thus be handled only two weeks later. Once again the system is designed for a non-literate or semi-literate people for whom the spoken word of radio is probably more suitable than it has become in ours. The system however is relying on writing or on print for the input from an orally-oriented people. The feedback is thus predictably limited and suspect in its representativeness of the concerns of people who do not normally express themselves in writing.

This centralized broadcast model also dominates the field of educational television here and elsewhere. It is well known that there are built-in technical and economic restraints which make centralization almost inevitable in the translation of television broadcast technology to educational purposes. Production is expensive, and requires a considerable even if debateable degree of expertise. In the interests of efficiency and economy, production becomes almost invariably centred in one place controlled by a limited number of trained and skilled personnel.

As George Gerbner has put it:

> Selectivity and control, which are inherent in any communication, dominate the mass-communication process. The right to acculturate a nation and to shape the public agenda has never been open to all; it is one of the most carefully guarded powers in any society. The real question is not whether the organs of mass communication are free but rather: By whom, how, for what purposes and with what consequences are the inevitable controls exercised?[10]

When this model is transferred to a developing country therefore, you very often find the control of production and programming in the hands of those with the training and expertise — the western educators. Even where attempts are made to introduce native people to the origination process, it is at a low level through apprenticeship trainee programs. Decisions about the organization, implementation, style of operation, content and manner of delivery of education are almost universally made under the direction of western-trained educators who are using a western invention — television broadcasting.

How a western-type communications system grafted on to a developing country affects its culture is dramatically demonstrated in American Samoa.[11, 12] Here is what happened. The U.S. government spent millions of dollars on hardware and expertise to wire up every classroom throughout the islands of their protectorate. Then with the appointment of a new governor, the entire system came under scrutiny, its results were labelled "cultural genocide". The label is of course not so much a condemnation as a tautology. Given the system, and the dictates imposed by that system upon the style of the operation, it could be little else but an efficient system for the Americanization of Samoa. How can a new superintendent use such a centralized one-way broadcast television system to provide an interactive culturally sensitive program of individualized instruction?

In our own schools we have come to realize the limitations of educational television as learning techniques. Especially in the early stages we have come to place far more emphasis on exploration, on the opportunity to question and receive answers, on individualized instruction! We are redesigning our own communications technologies to make them more responsive to similar kinds of information transmittal and inquiry needs in Canadian communities.[13]

But at the same time as we have been discovering this at home, the western nations continued to export the tool to their various developing protectorates.[14] The French in 1970 were masterminding an educational television network to serve the entire country of the Ivory Coast. It was modelled on a smaller experimental system pioneered by the French Agency for International Cooperation along the Niger River in Niger. It may be, when the expertise among the people belonging to the culture is sufficient that they can run it, that these systems will provide a valuable adjunct to information/education systems in

these countries. But because of their technical and economic limitations imposed by the western experience of those who have to direct them, they are not readily adaptable to the needs of rural cultures.

A simple technology that requires less training in the thought patterns and methodologies of an alien culture has less likelihood of resulting in an alien system. Ironically the simpler technology adapted to these kinds of uses does exist, is far less costly, requires less maintenance and less expertise than that which we have been disposed to use. The Australians, of course, have used simple pedal operated two-way radios for more than two decades in their justly famous School of the Air. The man who invented those pedal radios for the Australian outback has invented others that can be powered by bicycling or by batteries or by a variety of means. A number of them are in use in the system in Nigeria that provides medical information and emergency aid to people in the rural areas of that country. Perhaps ironically it is in Australia (from which we borrowed basic ideas) that RAVEN has received the most careful attention. In recommendations from the Van Leer Research Centre of the University of Australia in Sydney, recommendations on aboriginal education included this paragraph:

> Radio and visual aid programmes including video-tape programmes among aborigines be designed especially but not exclusively for isolated aboriginal families.
> (Recommendation # 22)[15]

The African country which seemed most aware of the issues and most responsive to the premises upon which RAVEN is designed is Tanzania. As those familiar with the situation in that country will know, great emphasis has been placed by the leadership on maintaining the rural and agricultural traditions of the people. They are making a conscious effort to avert the rush to urban centres and the consequent pockets of unemployment that characterize a number of other African nations. They place high priority on the preservation of traditional values such as the extended family and try to promote the virtues of self reliance and independence among the people in the outlying villages.[16]

They maintain a strong functional network of people, keeping lines of communication open between committees at the national, regional and village level. Transportation by their standards is expensive, requiring Land Rovers to negotiate dirt and seasonal mud tracks. A primary objective is the development of more and more Ujamaa villages, that is cooperative agricultural communities. Priority is given to their information, education and mechanical needs over other villages in the country. Tanzania is also alert to the fact that television of any variety is beyond their means economically. They are loathe to become dependent upon any of the industrialized nations for large-scale technological development. They are, however, within range of a new satellite earth station in Nairobi and no doubt will soon be the recipients of the benevolence of the industrialized nations bringing them television broadcasting.

Interest has been expressed by members of the Education Ministry of Tanzania in the kinds of technology and premises underlying RAVEN. They see the parallels between the needs of the rural people and the kinds of services performed for native Indians by RAVEN without postulating that the same technology could be simply transferred to their setting. It seems highly probably however that the same procedures and the identification of needs that preceded RAVEN would produce a design for a system that resembles very little the conventional mass communications network of the western nations. Tanzania will be an interesting case to watch. Whether they prove as strong and as knowledgeable in directing their own development in communications as they have in their economic and social policy remains to be seen. They always labor of course under the serious handicap of needing financial assistance from outside. The large international and national aid-giving agencies characteristically think in terms familiar to their personnel-- large-scale western broadcast and educational communications formats.

It will be interesting to see whether the movement spearheaded by the Centre for Intermediate Technology in London has any impact on thinking in the educational and communication spheres as it has had in the industrial and agricultural ones. The Centre repeatedly points out that the need in developing countries is more often for a better plow then it is for a tractor for which developing nations have neither the fuel, the parts, the maintenance expertise, nor the economic base from which to generate these things.

> The essence of the new approach is this: that whereas the conventional approach to industrialization takes technology as a <u>given</u> factor in development, as if it were an unchangeable force to which all other factors must adapt themselves, those who advocate the new approach -- and we certainly are such advocates -- start by considering technology as an important <u>variable</u> element which can and should be adapted so as to work in harmony with the economic, social, and cultural environments of developing countries.[17]

A similar argument, buttressed by sociological and psychological observations, can be made for the need for intermediate communications technology in these countries.

Dallas Smythe questioned Chinese communications engineers during a recent visit to China as to why they were setting up a system for one-way television broadcasting. He pointed out that the technology was developed in the WEST to achieve objectives of mass marketing etc. that were hardly those of the Chinese, and pointed out that it was equally feasible for them to develop two-way systems. Professor Smythe reports that the engineers saw his point immediately, but that interestingly enough, the academics at Peking University to whom he recounted the incident later, did not.

That is perhaps just one more illustration of how our own assumptions,

prejudices and characteristic ways of viewing things influence our planning and policy making and how much leaders of other countries--however distant from us culturally--have been influenced by them. It is perhaps only with the jolt of seeing the impact of these conventions and assumptions on other cultures that we come to appreciate just how limited they are. No one is asserting of course that any communications system, RAVEN or otherwise, is going to guarantee a successful achievement of social or educational goals. And certainly no one is asserting that the wholesale transfer of the RAVEN design to other cultures will yield a system any more satisfactory to that culture than our centralized one-way systems have proved in the past. It seems however that the RAVEN design represents at least one step away from the conventions under which we have thought and labored in the western countries for several decades. The plea is made for similar patterns of thought and analysis to precede any wholesale imposition of communication in other parts of the globe.

We may conclude then that RAVEN buttresses the insight that simpler communication technologies leave greater scope for the people of other cultures to determine and shape their own networks such that they are more likely to reflect their cultural patterns and to achieve their social objectives. More sophisticated equipment on the other hand, carries with it an almost unavoidable trend toward centralization, the need for a higher level of training and a consequent imposition of alien thoughts and communication patterns upon a culture. The RAVEN level of technology may provide a sort of filter through which people may in their own way, in their own time, take from the "advanced" societies what they need in order to survive and adapt to the demands of an industrializing world.

As another member of the Intermediate Technology Group puts it:

> . . . modern technology is not culturally neutral. It implies a set of values relating to work, education, organisation, public and private expenditure, which are part of the fabric of Western market economies; but they can be, and are, thoroughly disruptive in countries trying to build up their own identities, their own pattern of life and work.[18]

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**Dorothy Todd Hénaut**
**The National Film Board Challenge for Change**

# Films for Social Change: The Hammer and the Mirror

"If you're as confused as most of us about the genuine Indian way of life, if you've had trouble understanding what exactly it is that's the problem with the James Bay Project, there's a film on CBC-TV tonight you shouldn't miss.

It's not propaganda in any way, and it isn't focused on the James Bay Project. Well, to be honest, it is propaganda, but only to the extent of giving the white population of the south a clear understanding of how Indians live in the wilderness and why they need great areas to support a hunting population.

The film is called Cree Hunters of Mistassini and you can see it tonight at 9:30 p.m.

The documentary follows three Cree families as they hunt and fish most of a year on the land owned (if that word applies to Indians now) by one of the three families.

There are 16 people in the three families and everyone is important ...that's one of the most striking aspects of the film. All members of the families have their essential contributions to make to survival. Nobody is less important thar anyone else in the total plan, and the children all help and thereby learn the skills they will need when they are adults.

The three families form what I suppose we'd call a commune, and the way they organize their lives during the winter is quite remarkable. There are 16 people living in a one-room lodge built during the autumn. They live in total isolation throughout the winter, busy with their chores, apparently healthy and cheerful, and a very far cry from the alienated Indians we generally see on television.

You may be as surprised as I was to discover the care they take in planning the use of their land and its animal life. Contrary to what we've all learned from the movie industry, Indians take good care to know how many animals there are in their hunting area, where they are, and how many can be killed each year.

Every few years they leave their area fallow, if that's the right word when it's applied to animals instead of crops. That's why there are three families in this film hunting the land of one family -- the others have left their land for a year to give the animal population a chance to replenish, and the following year the land seen in this

film will probably be left without hunters while its owners spend the season with another family.

There's nothing haphazard in the Indians' scheme of things at all. They did, after all, survive and develop many art forms in a far from hospitable climate and luck didn't have a lot to do with it.

The Indians do now use a few items of white civilization they didn't once have -- chain saws, small wood-burning stoves and some sheets of plastic...guns too, if you want to go back a long way. But they could do very well without them, and they did for heaven knows how many hundreds of years.

I've never seen a film that gave me so clear a view of the real life of the North American Indian, nor so convincing an argument for leaving in their hands the huge tracts of wilderness land they need and tend so carefully.

Cree Hunters of Mistassini documents what may, to our shame, be a vanishing way of life. It's a simple, beautiful and altogether unforgettable hour which can scarcely fail to give any thinking human being considerable food for thought.

Boyce Richardson wrote, directed and narrated the film. Co-director was award-winning cinematographer Tony Ianuzielo.

You may never see anything quite like this again, and I can't urge you too strongly to watch it tonight."[1]

Joan Irwin, The Montreal Star's TV critic, describes the film very nicely. She forgot to mention that the film was produced by the Challenge for Change program of the National Film Board; that it had been designed to "improve understanding and provoke social change", and was a good example of a film that does just that. And she probably didn't know it had had an interesting career before it ever reached any film or TV screens. This film serves as a good starting point for exploring the effectiveness of different types of film in the arena of social change.

In 1972 Challenge for Change had a number of social priorities for the year, among which were aboriginal rights. Boyce Richardson, former Montreal Star associate editor and reporter, had travelled the length and breadth of the Canadian north a number of times, and had produced a series of hard-hitting articles on the rights of our native peoples and on the ecological evolution of the north. He had fought the Québec government's James Bay Project to the point where his services were no longer required at the Star. Boyce was extremely knowledgeable about the native people's struggles, and about the south's attempts to ignore them.

Challenge for Change invited Boyce to present a proposal for a film on aboriginal rights, to be produced by Colin Low and co-directed by

Tony Ianuzielo, an experienced director-cameraman who shared Boyce's concern for the subject.

But the proposal for a hard-hitting journalistic document had a very mixed reception in Ottawa. While some were enthusiastic, there were powerful forces that did not want the film to be made. It was a subject of enormous importance to the native people, and it was important to try to affect the thinking in Ottawa, if possible, since it was the key locus of decision-making. So instead of going into a head-on battle, crying censorship, or giving up, the Film Board decided to simply do a series about native people and their lives, starting with a Cree family in the James Bay area, and to take very special care in making the film or films.

Imbued with the Challenge for Change credo about making a film with the people, instead of just about them, Boyce and Tony went off to Mistassini to talk with their friends there, and later, editor Virginia Stikeman joined the team at play-back sessions. The brochure for the film tells the story:

"A central issue in the contentious James Bay development scheme is the conflict it creates between a hunting culture, with all its values, and the dominant white culture that has come to rely heavily on large-scale technology. This film -- made in the bush near Mistassini -- affords the hunters and trappers of James Bay their first opportunity to show what is at stake for them if the power project goes forward.

The culture of the Cree hunters of the James Bay area is a culture of great strength. The film is a cooperative effort between the filmmakers and three hunting families, a conscious attempt to show how the Indians there live with the land in a way that reflects not only their complex and subtle religious beliefs but also a complete set of ecological principles.

The filmmakers chose the hunters but the hunters also chose them. After consultation, the families and filmmakers agreed to meet to film the building of the winter camp. Later in the winter the film crew returned to experience the rhythms of Cree family life and the hunt, including hunting rituals and intimate scenes of drumming and feasting after the hunt.

As agreed ahead of time, a rough version of the film was shown to the families in the summer of 1973 -- shown to them twice -- and then to the whole community that had come out of the bush to summer in Mistassini. They had been promised that any part could be deleted and that every attempt would be made to add anything they felt was important. Their acceptance at the time was confirmed in early spring of 1974, when the James Bay Cree for the first time heard the offers of the Québec government.

A powerful community is seeking decisions that are greatly affecting these people. They have come to understand the need to systematize their ideas and relate them to a white way of thinking . This film is one expression of that understanding". It does not hit its audience over the head or between the eyes. Like all powerful films it reaches the emotions, infusing through the heart and up to the mind so that we find ourselves really changed by the experience.[2]

Is that enough? What are the intentions the Challenge for Change program has with the film? What were the goals for a special distribution carried out from April to July 1974 by Mark Zannis, an activist with the James Bay Defense Committee and co-author of The Genocide Machine in Canada?[3] His report outlined them as follows:

a) to achieve a 'political' impact to stimulate audiences to concern and action around the James Bay issue and the impact of the hydro-electric project on the life of the inhabitants of the James Bay area.
b) to stimulate the future distribution of the film following its official release by organizing showings for groups which could serve the purpose of interesting other groups in seeing this film and other films of a similar nature.
c) to test the film on various types of audience, from the point of view of age and interests, so as to guide the distribution of the film and suggest potential written material and other aids useful over the long term .[4]

The film was screened in Montreal, Québec City, Ottawa, Kingston, and Toronto, and then in the Cree settlements along the coast of James Bay: Rupert House, Eastmain, Paint Hills, Fort George and Great Whale. Reactions were overwhelmingly positive. The general public, who saw the film on television in July, loved it, and understood its political impact, as reflected by letters to the editor and by articles in the media. "Many people who viewed the film have since become actively involved in support of the cause of the James Bay Indians. This was achieved by directing those who expressed a concern to groups already involved in the cause".[5] Groups involved in native rights will find the film useful in building membership or allies for their goals. Schools at all levels will find the film an effective classroom tool. A French version has been made and will soon be causing Québec audiences some reflection.

But the film had a perhaps unexpected impact on the people of the James Bay region. Mark Zannis tells it best: "The film was taken to the James Bay area to be screened to Cree audiences, who have no access to television and might otherwise be unable to see the film for some time. It was felt that the film was of immediate importance there because of the court case and negotiations; and, it was hoped the film might generate some interest in the current legal situation...The National Film Board has gained some credibility as the first body to vi-

sit the area and to generate a greater sense of common identity among the people of the different settlements. In Paint Hills the film was much more popular than even the CBC one-hour special, The Cree of Paint Hills. The chief reason for the popularity of the Mistassini film was that the Indians spoke; it was their statement".[6]

The same film crew has just completed a companion film, Our Land is Our Life, that focuses on the importance of the land to the native people all across the north. It uses as an example the history of Mistassini, where two thirds of the people still hunt all winter, but where the heavy hand of the white man has tried to reshape the Indians' life, and much public money has been spent to turn Mistassini into an average Canadian small town. Most notably, that brutal hand has picked up the children and sent them away — in a vicious and often successful attempt to alienate them from the parents and from their historical way of life. And finally the hob-nailed boot of the James Bay Development project, or similar projects elsewhere, is stomping over the land, busy trying to present a fait accompli to any judge who might, like Judge Malouf, recognize the rights of the Indians to the land on which they have lived for centuries.

This film is much closer to the original film proposal, but it is imbued with the quiet dignity of the native people themselves. It teaches us other things about them we have ignored so long. And judging from the two screenings so far, the second film may surpass the first in impact, at least with southern audiences and with organized native groups.

I think it is possible, from the Cree films, to draw up nine guidelines for making films that will effect social change. First, make no attempt to be coldly distant or "objective", in the sense of "dealing with outward things, exhibiting actual facts uncoloured by exhibitor's feeling or opinions".[7] Making a film about people rather than with them leaves your audience at about the same distance, or farther away, and probably will not change them in any way. What about "telling both sides of the story?". In this case, the James Bay Corporation has ample public money to make any number of public relations films or otherwise reach the public with its message. Do they let the Indians tell their side of the story? Relax...and express your commitment.

You can, however, bring a certain kind of objectivity to the situation, if by this you mean a fresh new look, a balanced look, and a rigorously honest look. Third, recognize the community of spirit or common goals between the filmmaker and the people being filmed. If they are there they will add considerably to the impact of the film, and to its honesty. In the case of the Cree films, the common goals were to defend both human rights and the ecology of the area. The passion of the filmmakers matched the commitment of the people, and added to the strength of the statement.

Make the film with an audience in mind, or make it so that it can be

used by groups active in raising debate on the issues, and trying to effect the body politic. Fifth, test screening before you finish the film, to be sure your instincts are right about how the audience will understand it.

Six, make a beautiful film, with the highest quality of shooting and editing you can reach. Honest and sincere mediocrity is not enough, if you want to make a film that can help people change their world. In fact, people expect you to bring your professionalism to your work, and if they learn to trust you, and then find you have made a mediocre or ineffective film with them, they won't be overjoyed. To involve people in the editing doesn't mean having them decide every shot. It means helping you judge whether you have put the right emphasis and balance on what they have to say, or whether you have left anything out. They want you to be an artist as well as an activist. (It is a slightly different story when you are training people to do their own films or videotapes, and where the first aim is straightforwardness and clarity, and a very close knowledge of their audience and of themselves.)

Make an intelligent film. Emotion without intellectual cohesion doesn't have much staying power, and the two are not mutually exclusive. Eight, build in the process during filming — give the people their images back. It is a gift that will help them feel individually and collectively stronger, give them new insights into themselves or reinforce old insights. It will also keep you in close touch with them, so that your film will really be their voice. It can also effect events, if your timing for a screening is right. Reactions to the screening of the Cree Hunters of Mistassini were filmed in March 1974, as were the discussions about the government's offer to the Cree. The film, by illustrating what they are fighting for, helped the discussions, which were subsequently edited into Our Land Is Our Life.

Finally, build process into the distribution as well. Try to arrange screenings with audiences that may benefit from speaking with each other. Try to arrange for discussions afterward, and to have complementary written and filmed materials available, so that the audience can carry its learning process further. Just showing the movie is only a small part of the task.

This little list is far from being exhaustive, but it does illustrate some of the things that have been learned by the Challenge for Change program over the last seven years, in our efforts to experiment with the media as tools in the social change process. Our first thrust was to help citizens gain access to the media, in order to gain a public voice. At first the filmmakers, in the Fogo Island Project, learned to make films with people and for people, instead of just about people. The aim was to help them understand themselves and to get together to improve their community. Film was a tool in the community development process. The power of the media could finally work for people. And continuity was assured by the involvement of a community development worker. A local film crew was trained, working out of Memorial University's Extension Department on a permanent basis, serving all of Newfoundland.

Videotape recording with the light, portable half inch machines that had by then been developed, was the logical next step. High costs and the professional middle men were eliminated, as citizens easily mastered the new technology, and "citizen access to the media" became "citizen media" -- citizens made videotapes about themselves, for themselves and by themselves, and assured their own continuity. By participating in public discussion, people began to participate rather than spectate in determining their own present and future.

The doors of cable television and the community channel were then battered down, and this has led also to occasional broadcast of half inch tapes on local television, as well as some effective onslaughts on citizen radio. A sensible lot, people didn't want to be limited to any one medium of communication, but learned which medium could reach which audience with the desired impact, and learned how to use it. The communications media were demystified with a vengeance.

Of course, with community media groups proliferating, there were in the beginning many errors, much time wasted, and a few hearts broken. The videofreak mystique grew and exploded like Aesop's frog, and financing for community groups was, and still is, a nightmare. We all forgot, at one time or another, how long it takes to build solid and significant changes into society, and how short a period of experimentation there has been, since the organization of Challenge for Change in 1967. But as each group of citizens masters its ability to reach and communicate with its fellow citizens, the body politic is strengthened, and the democratic dialogue becomes healthier. We will need all the health and strength we can get, to face up to the social and economic strains that appear imminent in Canadian society.

For people from outside of Canada, the sight of various government agencies subsidizing or otherwise encouraging the citizens' ability to talk to each other and to talk back to government is an improbable phenomenon. Only Connect, the report of the Study on Citizens Communications commissioned jointly by the Department of Communications, the Secretary of State, and the National Film Board may give some insight:

"We consider citizens communications a uniquely Canadian phenomenon, for the technological pluralism that gave birth to the citizens communications movement coincides with Canada's evident social, cultural and political pluralism. We not only lead the world in citizens communications; we in fact invented it, and we are now exporting it throughout the world. (One observer has suggested that citizens communications represents a kind of marriage between 'The medium is the message', and the NFB's grand old tradition of social documentary.) It is no accident that the largest citizens communications groups in the United States should be headed by a former director of Challenge for Change, nor that the first report on citizens communications in Britain (published by the University of Southampton) should quote Canadian sources for two-thirds of its collection of readings. Canadian teams are working in Tunisia and Algeria; Canadian techniques have been copied in California and Connecticut and Alaska, and are being studied in media.

This chauvinism is forgivable, we think, because it underlines the reason that in the final analysis justifies the existence of citizens communications and of a report about it. The fact is that citizens communications expresses the essence of Canada itself. Canadians have always been massively dependent upon, almost obsessed by communications -- beginning with the world's first long distance telephone call (Brantford to Paris, Ontario); continuing, through a statistical record, as the world's most loquacious telephone users and ending, for the moment, in the world's first domestic communications satellite system. Canada has also always been a loose federation, a pluralist society that somehow managed to combine institutional conservatism with respect for the freedom of the individual or of the group.

In recent years, this pluralism has acquired an increasingly political dimension. Quite apart from the jurisdictional see-saw between Ottawa and the provinces, there is quite clearly a comparable (and, we believe, a closer-to-reality) see-saw for the power between all the new citizens groups, native groups, neighbourhood and community and special interest associations on the one hand and governments, at all levels, on the other. Hence some of the most important uses of citizens communications have been concerned with broadening the base of participation, and with bringing the views of a wider range of interest to the attention of decision-makers".8 To me, that little grain of folly that allows our government to encourage debate and dissent is a sign of health. To lose it would be cause for deep concern.

If we have come so far, however, if people can make their own films or TV programs, why should we, Challenge for Change, or the National Film Board, continue to produce films at all? We've discovered that the new media literacy increases peoples needs for films rather than making the National Film Board obsolete. It makes them more able to utilize films about subjects of interest. For us the criterion for doing film is simply: Is there an audience beyond the immediate community of the people on the screen? If what they are accomplishing is of interest across the country, then it is worth making a good product, which is easy to distribute and will catalyze discussion and change in many places, instead of just in one.

Reactions to the Cree film illustrate graphically the hunger of the Canadian people to know the reality of their society and culture. Reactions to Arthur Hammond's Corporations series, though somewhat different, illustrate the point. This series of seven films about major Canadian organizations like the Steinberg food chain, was produced by the National Film Board and has been said to be in the vein of Challenge for Change. I wish we had more films of this depth and perspicacity. The films include six half-hour documentaries on the operations of the Steinberg Corporation, plus a 77-minute film called After Mr. Sam, that describes the process of choosing a replacement for the retiring president. They are films of great impact, and useful for understanding the world around us. Yet the approach here was very

different from the Cree films. since Arthur felt himself to be a "curious observer", interested in making a useful piece of public education by giving people a view of corporate operations from the inside out. He tried to be objective, although he adds, "Now obviously, I don't observe a thing absolutely purely. It goes through a certain amount of filtering as it goes through me"[9]

What has been interesting is the varied reactions of audiences. "If the range of opinion so far is any indication, it appears that people tend to bring their already set attitudes and opinions to the films, and go away with the same attitude and opinions. One man calls them PR for Steinbergs, another calls them part of a conspiracy to overthrow the capitalist system, another calls them the same old tired slam against big business".[10] Arthur responds: "The more objective the film, the easier it is for the audience to have differing opinions. I think the truth about the films lies somewhere in the middle -- they are a fairly objective account of the operations and social influence of large corporations...I wasn't interested in doing a pro or con thesis on the Corporation. I was interested in exploring a world and that's, I guess, the way that documentary interests me...On the other hand, I have certain views or preferences about life and the world which are bound to show up at certain times, and I think in the International Operations film it's fairly clear where my sympathies lie . . .

There's certainly a big argument about objectivity. There are filmmakers who say you can't make objective films, and that you shouldn't try. You should go all the way and make films which clearly take a point of view, and identify it. I think that's one way of making films, but I think there are many ways. It doesn't appear to be the way I make them. Yet in the film I made about B.C. Indians, called This Land, I have a kind of attitude which comes through in that film I guess, which is very sympathetic to the Indians and their aboriginal land claims...But I don't try to be consistent so..." (Neither do we, Arthur, and your films are a fine example of intelligent, sensitive and useful objectivity.)

The way I look at it is that Corporations are part of a whole process of growth and technological development and that kind of process is going to go on. If it becomes very undesirable it can be influenced, and if enough people object to farm land being built over, they can bring influence to bear on a government to do something about it... If people want to go from there and say they don't like that part of the process, and have ideas about what should be done about the process, that's fine. Then the films themselves might be part of another process.

I have my own view about how much films can influence people or events. I believe it's a very limited influence. I think that occasionally a film might cause a specific change, but that's probably fairly rare. I think what may happen more is that films, like other creative work and other information are part of a total process of

information, which may lead to formation of opinion, which may lead to changes. But they're just little drops along the way".[11]

A nice healthy realism, after all my optimistic thinking; in fact, I believe that ambiguity is a part of the total reality, and paradoxes have a way of hanging around. The Fogo Island Project, the seminal experiment of Challenge for Change, has been seen as the triumph of media as a community development tool, as the community went from a 60% welfare economy to a bustling fishing community developed on co-operative lines. Yet some people have said that the real community development was taking place in the centrally located pub that united the ten disparate villages. And others have said that the films only helped to build a new power structure that became thoroughly entrenched. However, the community development process has continued, and there has been a complete renewal of the leadership within the last year. We may never know precisely how much film effected events. Perhaps it is more elusive than the gruff instruments of social science can measure. But I guess we have to keep on trying to find out.

My own feeling is that film never actually effects changes -- these are carried out by men and women who are organizing and working for change. The film or video can only help them see more clearly, feel better about what they're doing, and heighten their feeling of achievement. It compresses the time factor, and accelerates the process that they are engaged in. Or, more simply, it can give them hope and encouragement in their struggle to carry on.

In the meantime, we continue to live with our ambiguities, and we continue to try to help changes occur. In 1973, Roger Hart, continuing the old collaboration between Challenge for Change and Memorial University's Extension Division, went to the north coast of Labrador with Ian Strachan, the community development worker for Memorial, to shoot a film about the way the native people are slowly taking over control of their villages, and banding together in facing governments. The shooting took place at the same time that the Royal Commission on Labrador was making its findings. The film footage was transferred to twelve 20-minute videotapes and these were shown immediately to the people of the villages, and feedback from that operation started to come in to Roger as he was editing the film. The edited film was also shown to the people, who were very pleased with it. In fact, the screening in Nain immediately affected a local political power shift.

But Roger was hoping that the film would affect government policies in the area. Here are excerpts from a memo to Roger from Wally Wason, Challenge for Change distribution representative for the maritimes. "Labrador North will be telecast in the next week or so by CBNT within their Here and Now program. This locally produced CBC news show runs 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. five nights a week and enjoys the island's largest viewing audience of over 100,000. The executive producer liked the film and will introduce it on the show within the context of the imminent release of the report of the Royal Commission on Labrador."

Roger notes: "On Wednesday morning I conducted a screening before 13 senior provincial government officials from the Department of Education and Department of Labrador Services. They were unilaterally hostile, picky, critical, cranky and incensed in varying degrees. (The 14th member of the group was a crippled old Eskimo from Nain who watched with rapt attention and was wheeled away without a word). All the rest remained when I invited them to stay behind for a few moments and give me their reactions, at your special request. A few moments indeed! An hour and twenty minutes later they were still at it, dismissing the film as narrow, one-sided, biased, predictable, unfair, distorted and a waste of the tax-payer's money...Ian Strachan's presence on the screen was the equivalent of waving a red rag before a bull. One chap demanded to know why in heaven's name we didn't record some of the 'good' things accomplished by Labrador Services. He wanted shown on the screen some of the fine new buildings they had erected.

This kind of question got us into a whole new area of discussion which they seemed to enjoy: the inherent bias of the media due to the necessity of selection of material and the subsequent editing process performed by a person with a particular point of view. Moreover, the discussion even progressed onto an ideological level when we explored that peculiar aspect of Canadian democracy which permits a government to fund community development workers who then go out and encourage people to organize in such a way as to end up critical of that government's programs. The session ended on a friendly basis however and they all shook hands in turn before departing for lunch.

While the film does focus primarily on the process by which the coastal natives are beginning to exert more control over their own affairs through the increasingly active village councils, it is by no means a classical 'advocacy' film. Its mixture of history, interview and documentation of a particular democratic process is all connected by an objective commentary. The final product is more innocuous, certainly, than the Extension people maintain, consequently, the peculiarly negative response of these government officials only demonstrates how wide the gap is between their version of reality and the 'truth' as perceived by a responsible filmmaker from the NFB.

Is the only alternative then, to do a bland, and 'balanced' film which gives equal time? Could you have made a good film totally on your own without enlisting the aid of Ian Strachan and his cohorts? You probably could have, but it would have to be one that operates on a different level of reality and relevance than one normally associated with Challenge for Change. I bet you could do it though, and I bet I would like it better. Maybe even tired old bureaucrats would like it better because it would be less pejorative and more subversive on a subtler level".

The film was very much what the people on the coast wanted the government to see, and Tagak Curley, former president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (the Eskimo brotherhood), who knew the coast well, thought it was an excellent film. Maybe we should just point out to ourselves

that there are some situations or people that are just impenetrable to film, and not try to do everything. It is, after all, just one element in a total social process. Nevertheless, some films have been known to help government people see a situation in a different light. The Fogo films themselves, Wilf, PEI Planning, Working Mothers, among others, have given us enough hope to keep on trying.

As the years go by, we keep accumulating more questions than answers. Although we learn from past experience, each project is an unique experience. I don't have space to tell the story of La Noce Est Pas Finie, Léonard Forest's fiction film created by a group of poor citizens in north-east New Brunswick, that affected self-understanding and social action in that region. Léonard believes that film is an ideal tool for raising individual and collective consciousness. Nor do I have space to tell the story of Kathleen Shannon's Working Mothers series, whose distribution impact has been incredible, whose portraits of women who work have catalyzed not only women, but men and children as well. Film is indeed a useful tool.

In order to effectively help Canadian citizens recognize social change, deal with it and direct it, there is a great need for films that will describe the way things are -- the social ecology of the system, and how it works, or doesn't work. There is also a need for films that propose how things could be. All over the continent, small groups are trying to find alternative approaches to our problems. A few people are trying to prepare for the future -- working out an ecological agriculture, non-polluting energy sources, decentralization, cooperative housing and food, re-democratization of their communities or their universities or their health services, community television -- small earnest efforts to make the world more liveable, more human in scale. These stories are little known now, but they could give hope and strength to the many who are frustrated or apathetic, and could encourage more efforts to change the direction of the technological juggernaut. Films about these efforts, be they documentary, essay, fiction or fantasy, could help to multiply such experiments, and have a cumulative effect in changing the world.

Judging by the requests for the film I have just completed, The New Alchemists, people are more than anxious to learn about alternatives to the present system. The film, about a quixotic but competent and charming group of scientists, housewives and fish maniacs building windmills, using solar energy, growing fish for protein and doing organic gardening -- developing survival technology on a postage stamp farm -- is igniting the imaginations of a lot of people.

I am lucky to be able to participate in the distribution of this film, to learn how audiences can use it, not just to watch it. Being able to participate in distribution is essential to someone who wants to become an effective filmmaker in the arena of social change. Because if you are interested in affecting audiences, you have to gain experience in how audiences react or how they use film. In Challenge for Change we try to plan the film's distribution from its inception,

having the distribution coordinator work with the filmmaker from the onset. It feels good, as a filmmaker, to have that support, and to know that your film is going to be utilized effectively by the people who need it, instead of disappearing anonymously onto shelves and into statistics. The new Environment studio at the NFB also has a distribution coordinator working with them, and it will make a big difference to everyone.

I realize I have not talked about all the disasters that can happen with film meddling in social change. The least worrisome are the dull thuds, the mediocre dust-collectors that we all try to forget. The ones we have to be careful about are the heavy-handed do-gooders without enough community experience, parachuting in to make miracles and causing real damage. Film is too powerful a tool for playing around. Make sure you are very responsible, relate to a responsible segment of the community (and I'm not talking about the Chamber of Commerce), try to assure continuity in the community. Above all, be cautious — think small and go slow.

But, to get back to a word mentioned by Joan Irwin at the very beginning, were we all involved in propaganda? There is a word to chill the marrow of any good liberal democrat's bones. The dictionary says propaganda is a concerted movement to disseminate a principle, belief or practice. It does not sound quite so bad when you put it that way. After all, you cannot have the courage of your convictions if you do not have any convictions.

John Grierson himself believed the NFB should be engaged in propaganda. In fact, that revered founder of the institution produced a film called War for Men's Minds during the war with Hitler. He believed that propaganda did not have to mean lies or brainwashing, that it meant solid information and commitment to one's ideals, and should include questioning the reasons for events.

Grierson believed that film should be used as a hammer rather than a mirror, to hammer home a message that expressed the Canadian reality. It isn't as simple as that. The mirror the films have held up to the Cree or the women in Working Mothers helps them become stronger, so they can take up their own hammers and build their own world. Perhaps a good and honest filmmaker can create either a hammer or a mirror, and both will have an impact on the course of events.

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develops the three measures of social significance for communications. His Greening of the Wired City presents a view of how a wired city might be structured from an economic standpoint. He also published a series of reprints and preprints entitled The which the Canadian journalist newspaper Content describes in their January '72 issue as "the only example of corporate journalism which gives readers credit for some intelligence."